

THE LIBERTY "BOYS OF '76"

A Weekly Magazine containing Stories of the American Revolution.

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No. 87.

NEW YORK, AUGUST 29, 1902.

Price 5 Cents.

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By HARRY MOORE



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CHAPTER I.

STOPPED ON THE HIGHWAY.

"Surrender, er ye air er dead man!"

A horseman had just reached the bank of the Roanoke River in the northern part of North Carolina when the above command greeted his hearing. The rider in question was a bronzed and handsome youth of perhaps twenty years of age, and he was dressed in citizen's clothing, there being nothing to indicate that he was other than what he seemed, though this was in May of the year 1781, during the Revolutionary War, when every one was supposed to be either for or against King George.

As the ominous words fell upon the young man's hearing he brought his horse to a stop, for a dozen fierce-looking men, armed with rifles and pistols, leaped out in front of him and barred the way. A quick glance showed him that there were four or five more behind him. His escape was entirely shut off.

"What does this mean?" he asked quietly.

"Whut does et meen, hey?"

"That is what I asked."

"Et meens thet ye've got ter surrender."

"But what for?"

"Whut fur?"

"Yes."

"Wal, I reckon thet's simple enuff; cause I tells yer to."

"That's the reason, eh?"

"Yas; an' et's reezon enuff, too, ye bet!"

"No doubt you think so."

"Yed think so, too, ef ye knowed who I am."

The youth looked at the speaker sharply.

"Is that so?" he asked slowly.

"Ye bet et is!"

"Who are you, then, if I may ask?"

"Ye'd reely like ter know?"

"Why, yes; you see, I'm rather a curious sort of fellow,

and when my curiosity is once aroused I am like a fish out of water, restless-like, till I have said curiosity satisfied."

"It thet so?" The man, who was a big, brawny, dark-faced and fierce-looking fellow, looked at the cool youth rather searchingly. He did not know just what to make of him.

"Yes, that's so."

"Humph. Wal, hev ye ever heerd tell uv er feller by ther name uv John Bender?"

The young man shook his head.

"I don't believe I ever have."

"Ye hevn't?" The man was evidently surprised.

"No, I'm quite sure I haven't."

"Mebby ye've heerd tell uv 'Black John, then?"

The young man started, and looked at the speaker quickly and with interest.

"So ye've heerd tell uv him, hey?" with a grin.

The youth nodded.

"Yes, I have heard of him."

"I thort so frum ther way ye looked."

"Are you Black John?"

"I hain't nobody else, young feller."

"Why have you stopped me?"

"W'y?"

"That is what I asked."

"Wal—fur reezons."

"State them, for I'm in a hurry."

The scoundrel, and his comrades as well, grinned.

"Oh, yer in er hurry?" remarked Black John, ironically.

"Yes."

"Whar ye bound fur, young man?"

"I'm going South."

"How fur south?"

"Oh, down into South Carolina."

The man shook his head.

"I'm sorry ter dispoot yer word, young feller, but I don't think ye'll go enny further south jes' now."

"Why not?"

"Becos et's erg'inst ther rules."

"Against the rules?"

"Yas."

"What rules?"

"Black John's rules—haw, haw, haw!" and the scoundrel laughed loudly, his men joining in, as in duty bound.

"It's funny, isn't it," remarked the young man coldly.

"Oh, ye bet!—orful funny."

"It must be; but I don't see it. Tell me where the fun comes in."

"W'y, in yer not knowin' nothin' erbout Black John's rules."

"Well, you see, I could not be expected to; I'm a stranger in these parts."

"But ye sed ye hed heerd tell uv Black John."

"So I have; from settlers along the road, where I have stopped to stay overnight, or eat a meal."

"Oh, thet's how ye herd tell uv me, hey?"

"Yes."

"An' I s'pose thet ther mos' uv what ye heerd tell uv me wuzn't whut ye mought call jes' complermentary, hey?"

"Well, some of it wasn't complimentary."

"I s'pose not. I reckon they sed thet Black John wuz er purty bad man?"

"So some of them said."

"I shouldn' wonder an' sum uv 'em sed thet they thort I c'u'd give Ole Nick a good start an' then beat him out in er race, hey?"

"Well, they didn't exactly say that, but they intimated that you were a very apt pupil of Old Nick's."

"Haw, haw, haw! 'A very apt poopil' is good! Now ye bet I am er apt poopil, too, an' thet's no mistake."

"If the half that has been said about you is true, you certainly are, sir," was the cool reply.

"Humph. Say, young feller, who air ye?"

"Who am I?"

"Yas."

As the reader who has been reading the "Liberty Boys" stories has already suspected, the young man was Dick Slater, the captain of the company of youths known as "The Liberty Boys of '76," but he did not wish to let this fellow know who he was, if he could help it, so he replied:

"My name is Henry Watkins."

"Watkins, hey?"

"Yes."

"Whut ye headed South fur?"

"I have a sweetheart down in South Carolina, and I'm on my way down there to get married."

"Haw, haw, haw!" roared Black John. "D'ye heer the boys?"

The men nodded and grinned.

"This heer young feller whut we've stopped is er prospectiv' bridegroom! Would enny uv ye hev thort et say?"

"Hardly, cap'n," replied one.

"Wal, I sh'd say not. W'y, boy, yer altogether too young ter be thinkin' uv sech sollum things as matrimony, ye air, fur er fack."

"Do you think so?" asked Dick soberly.

"Ye bet I do. Say, et wouldn' do at all."

"You think not?"

"I'm shore uv et. Ye see, afore ye sh'd think uv gitthoumerried, ye sh'd furst be able ter take keer uv yerself—when stan'?"

"Oh, yes, I understand."

"Er man sh'd furst be able ter support wun afore he sh'd make er contrack ter support two; hain't thet widom?"

"With a capital W, friend John."

"Hey?" The fellow did not comprehend the youth's meaning.

"That's all right, John; never mind me; just tell me what you want of me, and then let me go."

"Let ye go, hey?"

"Of course."

"Wal, I guess not."

"You are not going to try to keep me from going on my way, are you?"

"Wal, I guess we won't purzackly try—but we'll jes' meet!"

"But you have no right to do anything of the kind."

"We hev ther might."

The youth looked quickly and searchingly at the men all of whom had leveled rifles in their hands, and then said coolly:

"I don't know about that."

"Whut!" Black John was evidently greatly surprised. It was not often that he encountered such a cool fellow as this young stranger.

"I said I don't know about that," pretending to think the man had not grasped his meaning the first time.

Black John waved his hand, indicating the men surrounding him.

"See 'em?" he asked.

"Happily, I'm not blind," was the cool reply.

"Ye see 'em, then, do ye?"

"Yes."

"I wuzn' shore erbout et. I thort mebbly ye wuz so neer-
lighted er sumthin' thet ye couldn't see more'n six inches
frunt uv yer nose. Yer shore ye see 'em?"

"Quite sure."

"How menny air ther uv 'em."

"Oh, I'm too tired to count; I should guess them at a
dozen."

"An' yet ye say ez how ye don' know erbout us hevin'
ther might ter do ez we please erbout keepin' ye frum goin'
in yer way?"

"Certainly."

The fellow gasped, and stared at the youth in open-
mouthed amazement. Finally he turned his eyes on his
men, and nodding toward Dick, said:

"Whut d'ye think uv 'im, boys?"

"He's er fool!"

"He's jes 'blowin'."

"Er crazy."

"He's er plum' ijiot!"

"W'y, we c'u'd eat 'im up in er minnet!"

Such were a few of the remarks made by the men, and
Black John turned his gaze on Dick, and nodded his head.

"Did ye heer thet?" he asked.

"Happily I'm not deaf."

"Oh, ye hain't deaf, nuther, hey?" with a grin.

"No."

"Ye kin see an' heer both, hey?"

"Yes."

"Thet's good. I kin tork ter ye, an' ye kin see me w'ile
I'm doin' et, hey?"

"Yes."

"Wal, then, Mr. Watkins, I mus' inform ye thet when
e say ye don' know erbout us hevin' ther might ter do
whut we wante with ye, ye air showin' thet ye air er
fool."

"Indeed?"

"Yas. Now I'm goin' ter prove ter ye thet ye air mis-
taken."

"You are?"

"Yas."

"What are you going to do?"

"I'm goin' to tell ye ter git down offen thet hoss, ther
furst thing."

"That is the first order, eh?"

"Yas; ye see, I don' think et's good manners fur ye ter
be settin' up thar at yer ease w'ile we fellers hev ter stan'."

"It does seem rather hard, doesn't it."

The youth's face was so perfectly sober that Black John
was puzzled. He did not know how to take the youth at all.
He had never encountered a person who puzzled him as this
cool young man had done.

"Git down offen thet hoss!" Black John suddenly roar-
ed; "d'ye heer?"

"I told you awhile ago that I am not deaf."

"Then hop down, an' do et quick!"

"And if I should refuse?"

"Then we'll riddle ye with bullets!"

"Surely you wouldn't do that!"

"Shorely we would—an' will."

"But that might hurt me."

"Et'll do wuss'n hurt ye; et'll kill ye dead ez er door-
nail, thet's whut et'll do."

"But that would be murder."

"Oh, cuss ye, shet thet mouth uv your'n an' hop down
offen thet hoss!" roared Black John, almost beside himself
with rage; "ye air makin' me mighty mad, young feller.
an' when I'm mad I'm dangerous."

Dick Slater had a purpose in talking as he had been do-
ing. He was not the youth to talk in this way just for
the fun of the thing. He felt that by talking in a flip-
pant, careless fashion he would be able to anger the man,
and cause him to be thrown off his guard through think-
ing that he (Dick) was not as smart as he might be, and
then take him by surprise.

This was just what the youth did do. Black John was
angry and disgusted, and the men had become so tired of
holding the heavy rifles out at arms'-length that they had
allowed them to lower considerable. This was Dick's op-
portunity, and suddenly driving the spurs into the horses'
flanks, he took the scoundrels by surprise. The horse
leaped forward with a snort of pain and rage, knocking
down one or two with his hoofs and body, and causing wild
yells and curses to go up from all.

The youth bent forward upon the horse's neck, and by
so doing escaped being hit when the four men who were
behind him fired their rifles, which they did as quickly as
they could after they saw what was going on.

They missed Dick, but one of the bullets brought the
horse down, and this was almost as bad for the youth as
if he had been hit, for he was forced to loosen his feet from
the stirrups and take a flying leap to avoid being fallen
upon and crushed by the animal.

In alighting Dick was overbalanced, and fell, and be-
fore he could leap to his feet the men had pounced upon
him, and although he struggled fiercely, he could not do

anything, and was soon a prisoner, his arms being bound behind his back.

CHAPTER II.

LIVELY TIMES.

"Thort ye'd get erway, didn' ye?" grinned Black John, when Dick was a prisoner, and standing helpless in their midst.

"I didn't know whether I could make it or not," was the cool reply, "but I thought I would try it."

"Ye done er mighty bad thing, I tell ye, young feller."

"Why so?"

"Becos ye hev hurt er couple uv my men, an' ye've got ter pay fur thet."

"Oh, I have?"

"Yas."

"All right; release me, and I will pay for it. How much do you assess their damages at?"

"Bah! Ye terk too much, young feller."

"But you said I would have to pay for——"

"I meant thet we would take pay fur thet outer yer hide—d'ye unnerstan?"

"Oh, yes, I understand what you mean by that."

"Uv course ye do."

"I don't see why you should lay up against me what was done by the horse, though."

"Ther hoss wuzn't ter blame; et wuz ye."

"Well, that is so, come to think of it. What are you going to do with me?"

"We hain't decided ez ter thet."

"Well, I wish you would hurry. I wish to continue my journey—though I don't see how I am to do it, now that you have shot my horse."

"Oh, you won't need er hoss, my young frien'."

"But I don't like to walk."

"Wal, ye won' haf ter walk, neether, I think."

"How'll I go, then?"

"Ye won' go."

"I won't?"

"No."

"Oh, I think I will."

"I think ye won't. Jim, s'arch ther cuss's pockets."

One of the men stepped forward and proceeded to go through Dick's pockets. He didn't find much. There were a few pieces of silver and gold, however, and these

the fellow handed over to Black John, who pocketed thet with an air of satisfaction.

"Isn't there enough there to pay for the injuries to you men, John?" asked Dick.

"No," was the reply; "munny won't pay thet. We got ter punish ye in sum way fur thet."

Then the man who had searched Dick's pockets went through the saddle-bags, and found nothing there save some old clothing, which were in one of the bags, and some food, which was in the other.

"We kin eat ther grub," grinned Black John; "a mebbly ther duds'll fit sum uv ther men."

The clothing was opened out, and was found to be a suit of Continental blue, whereat a great growl of rage went from the men.

"He mus' be er cussed rebel, cap'n!" growled one.

"An' er spy, like ez not!" from another.

Mutterings went around from mouth to mouth, and Dick very quickly realized that he was in the hands of enemies of the patriot cause.

"They are outlaws and Tories," he said to himself; "fear I am in for serious trouble if I don't exercise great care."

Black John pointed at the clothing, and looked searchingly and accusingly at Dick.

"Whut does thet meen?" he asked.

"What?"

"That rebel clothing."

"That?"

"Yas."

"Why, that's some that I got of a fellow three or four days ago."

"Oh, you did?"

"Yes."

"An' ye claim thet et hain't your'n?"

"It is now."

"An' yer er rebel, hey?"

"Oh, no."

"Oh, yas!"

"Not at all."

"Then what did you want with the uniform?"

"I traded with the fellow. He wanted a suit of citizen clothing like mine, and insisted on trading, and finally he gave me some money to boot, and I took him up."

"So thet's et, hey?"

"It is."

"Wal—I don' berleeve et."

A murmur of approval went up from the men, showing that they did not credit the story either.

"You don't believe it?"

"Not er bit uv et!"

"It's the truth."

"Bah!"

"Oh, all right; if you don't want to believe me, you needn't do so."

"I know thet; an' I berleeve thet ye air erbout ther biggest an' bes' liar I've seed in er long while."

"Thanks for the compliment."

"Oh, yer welcum! But now, boys, whut shell we do with this heer rebel cuss?"

"Tie 'im up ter er tree, cap'n, an' then let Mike an' me giv' 'im er good lickin' with hickory switches!" cried one.

"You're a nice specimen, you are!" said Dick scornfully.

"I suppose you will insist that I be tied good and tight. I would advise you to see that this is done, for should I manage to get loose while you were at the work I would kill you, as sure as anything can be."

"Bah! I hain't erfeerd uv ye!"

"You're a liar!"

"W-whut's thet!" The reply had been so prompt and forcible that the fellow hardly knew what to think or say.

"I spoke plainly. I say you're a liar when you say you are not afraid of me."

"Yer lyin' yerse'f when ye say ez how I'm erfeerd uv ye," the man retorted.

"Oh, you think I am, do you?"

"Yas."

"Well, I am not."

"Yas ye air!"

"Let me see, you are one of the two fellows who was hurt by my horse, aren't you?"

"Ye bet!"

"And the reason you wish me tied up and whipped is your desire to have revenge?"

"Thet's erbout et."

"Well, I'll tell you what I'll do. I will agree to meet you and the other fellow who was bumped by the horse—meet you both at once, with fists or weapons, and give you a chance to get revenge on me. What do you say?"

The fellow looked around him in rather an undecided manner.

"If you don't accept the proposition, it will prove that you are afraid of me," added Dick. "Another thing: I wish it understood that if I whip the two of you I shall be permitted to go my way unmolested."

"I kain't ergree ter thet," objected Black John.

"Why not?"

"Becos yer er rebel, an' likely er spy, an ez we air loyal men, we couldn' think uv lettin' ye go."

"Well, at any rate, don't tie me up to a tree and let those two cowardly scoundrels whip me with switches. If they want revenge they can have it, but make them fight me to get it, as I have proposed."

"Wal, thet's fa'r enuff fur them, I sh'd think," said Black John. "They'll be two ter wun, an' ef they kain't git revenge, then I sh'd say ez how they hain't entitled ter hav et."

A murmur of approval went up from the men at this, and it was evident that the majority were eager to see the contest.

"And if they are not afraid, they will agree to meet me, instead of holding out to have me tied to a tree," added Dick.

"Oh, we hain't erfeerd, hey Mike?" the fellow who had done most of the talking said.

"No, we hain't erfeerd uv 'im," said the man addressed as Mike; "an' ez fur ez I'm consarned I'd ruther fight wid 'im than jes' ter larrup 'im with switches. Et'll be more lively-like, an' interestin'."

"Yes, I'll guarantee that I will make it interesting for you," said Dick, calmly, whereupon some of the outlaws snickered. The idea of this beardless youth making a fight that would be sufficient to interest the two big, burly men seemed to them to be ridiculous.

"Oh, you don't believe it, eh?" smiled Dick. "Well, just free my arms, and form your ring; then turn the two men loose and see what happens."

"Thet's jes' whut we'll do," said Black John, and soon Dick stood with arms free, but without any weapons on his person—his belt of weapons had been removed—facing the two burly outlaws, who were regarding him with grins on their faces.

The youth saw the grins and smiled.

"I judge that you two fellows think you are going to have a lot of fun with me?" he remarked.

"Thet's jes' whut we're going ter do, young feller," declared one.

"Ye bet!" from the other.

"Well, I am sorry to have to inform you that you are destined to be disappointed, but strict consideration for the truth makes it necessary that I should do so; then, too, I dislike to take unfair advantage of you. It would be much like standing idly by and permitting a blind man to walk up against a circular saw."

"Oh, I reckon ye think ye air a mighty good man, hey?" said one in a growl.

"That's it; that's it, exactly. I am the best man that ever set foot in these parts, and I wish you two to understand it before we get to work; then you can't say that I took an unfair advantage of you."

"Haw, haw, haw!" roared the outlaws, who stood in a circle, surrounding the combatants-to-be.

"Oh, say, yer mighty kind, young feller!" remarked the man called Mike; "but I guess yer warnin' hain't needed. We kin take keer uv ourselves."

"You think you can?"

"We're shore uv et—hey, Jim?"

"Yas!" the other said with a leer.

"Very good; then I guess we might as well get to work. I didn't want you to have any hard feelings against me when it was over, and say that I had inveigled you into the affair."

"Haw, haw, haw!" roared Black John. "Say, ef ye kin fight ha'f ez good ez ye try ter make out thet ye kin, ye'll be able ter make et lively fur ther boys. But I don't ber-leave ye kin."

"I'll show you," said Dick quietly; "just start the trouble."

"All right; go fur ther rebel cuss, boys!"

The two outlaws rushed toward Dick with a roar of rage, intending to make quick work of the affair, but when they got to where the youth had been standing he wasn't there. He had evaded them with the greatest of ease, and they were two very much surprised men when they found that they had not succeeded in laying hands on the youth.

Dick had dodged and ducked, and came up behind them, with a smile on his face, and as they whirled to again rush upon him, he dealt Mike a terrible blow in the face, knocking him down as if he had been struck by a sledge-hammer. Eager to avenge the fall of his comrade, Jim then dashed at Dick, uttering oaths with every breath, and he struck at the smiling face of his lively antagonist with all his might.

He did not land, however, and the force of the blow swung him around. His side was toward Dick, and out shot the youth's fist.

Crack! The iron-like fist of the youth caught the outlaw on the jaw with terrible force, and down he went, ker-thump!

By this time Mike had struggled to his feet, but he was a bit dazed, and not quite sure of his bearings. Before he could get everything straightened out to his satisfaction Dick stepped calmly forward and dealt him a terrible blow on the jaw, just underneath the ear.

Mike dropped in his tracks, and lay still. Jim, too, still

lay where he had fallen, and after a few moments the spectators realized that the fight was over.

The beardless youth had thrashed both the outlaws, and they were really knocked out, insensible.

CHAPTER III.

ADrift ON A LOG.

"Wal, thet beats enythin' I ever seen!"

"Ye bet et does!"

"I wouldn't hev berleeved et posserable!"

"Nur me. I thort et'd be more'n he c'u'd do ter lick one uv 'em, ter say nothin' uv both!"

Such were a few of the exclamations.

The outlaws were amazed.

They had expected that their two comrades would have no difficulty in pounding the youth, but the shoe had been on the other foot—the two had got pounded.

"Say, how did ye l'arn ter hit so hard?" asked Black John, with no little show of interest.

"Oh, that is an easy thing to do," replied Dick.

"Is et?"

"Yes; all you have to do is to know how."

"Ye gotter hev consider'ble strength, too, hain't ye?"

"Oh, yes; but 'most every one has sufficient strength, if they know how to use it."

"Humph. I dunno 'bout thet."

"It's the truth just the same; and now I think you ought to permit me to go on my way."

"Ye do, hey?"

"Yes."

"We couldn't think uv doin' et."

"Why not?"

"'Cos yer er rebel."

"I have told you that I am not."

"I know ye hev."

"Then why not let me go?"

"Cos I don't believe yer story."

"What reason have you for not believing it?"

"Common sense tells me et hain't so. Ef ye wuzn't er rebel ye wouldn't be goin' aroun' with er rebel uniform in yer saddle-bags."

"I told you how those came to be in my possession."

"An' I tell ye we don't take enny chances on thet yarn bein' so."

"What are you going to do with me then?"

"Thet's ter be settled."

"All right; but I wish you would hurry and settle it."

"Oh, we'll git ter that soon enuff ter suit ye, I reckon," with a leer.

By this time Mike and Jim were showing signs of returning consciousness, and presently they sat up and looked around them in a wondering manner.

"Whar am I?" asked Jim.

"Whut's happened?" growled Mike.

"You fellows got struck by a hurricane."

"Ye tackled er lion an' got chawed up."

"Er tree fell onter ye."

"Ye've be'n ersleep."

"How d'ye feel, ennyway?"

Such were a few of the remarks, spoken ironically for the most part, and presently the eyes of the two fell on Dick, and it all came back to them.

"An' so do I," from Jim; "we wuz tryin' ter knock ther head off'n thet young cuss's shoulders, an'——"

"I reckermember now," growled Mike.

"Got your own very nearly knocked off, instead," said Dick, with a smile.

The two felt of their jaws in a most gingerly fashion.

"I guess ez how't thet's erbout ther trooth, jedgin' frum ther way my jaw feels," growled Mike.

"An' mine," from Jim, "feels ez ef er mule hed kicked me, an' thet's ther trooth."

"Get up, ye two," ordered Black John; "ye've played baby long enuff. We's got sum bizness ter tend ter."

The two scrambled slowly to their feet.

"You might ask the gentlemen if they are satisfied, Black John," suggested Dick; "if they are not, I stand ready to give them satisfaction."

"Oh, I'm satersified, ye bet!" from Jim.

"Me, too," from Mike. "I hain't er hog."

"Very well," said Dick quietly. "I didn't want that you should have it to say that I wasn't willing to afford you full and ample satisfaction, for I am quite willing to do so."

"We know ye air!" said Mike with a grimace.

"Yas, we know et," from Jim.

"Now, boys, the question is, what shall we do with this fellow?" said Black John. "He is a rebel, I am confident. What shall his fate be?"

"Hang 'im."

"Shoot 'im."

"Tie 'im ter er log an' float 'im orf down ther river."

These were a few of the suggestions, and Black John was silent for a few minutes, pondering. Finally he said:

"I'll tell ye whut et is, boys; this heer young feller may be er rebel—in fack I'm conferdent he is—but he's sech a all-fired brave feller thet et seems er pitty ter hang er shoot 'im."

"That's right!" in a chorus.

Thus spoke the members of the band, Mike and Jim being about the only ones who did not seem eager to permit Dick to have a chance for his life. Doubtless they would have been glad to see him hung, and help pull up on the rope.

"Seein' ez how ther mos' uv ye think ez I do in this heer matter," went on Black John, "I'll tell ye whut I've thort would be er good plan, an' thet is ter do ez wun uv ye menshunned er leetle while ergo—tie 'im ter er log an' send 'im floatin' on er v'yage down ther river. All in favor uv doin' thet say 'I'."

"I—I—I!" rang out the chorus.

"All erg'inst ther plan, say 'No'."

"No!" from Mike and Jim in chorus.

"Ther 'I's' hev et," said Black John; "so thet's whut we're goin' ter do with ye, young feller."

"Tie me to a log and set me afloat on the river, eh?"

"Yas."

"All right; I would prefer that to being shot or hanged, though of course I think you ought to let me go free."

"We couldn' think uv doin' thet."

The outlaws lost no time in putting their plan in execution.

They made their way down to the water's edge, with Dick in their midst, and search was made for a log suitable for their purpose.

One was soon found, and was rolled into the water. Next they placed Dick on the log, with his back to it, and tied him there securely with a long rope which was wound around the log and the youth's body, and tied. Then they gagged Dick, so that he would be unable to cry out for help.

"Not thet I think theer is much danger uv ennybuddy heerin' ye ef ye sh'd call out," said Black John, "fur theer's mighty few settlers down ther river frum heer, but et is ez well ter make shore uv et by gaggin' ye."

Then he gave the word, and the outlaws shoved the log out into the river.

The log moved slowly and sluggishly at first, as it had not yet reached the current, but presently it drifted out far enough so that the current got hold of it, and then it began to move more swiftly.

The outlaws watched the log and its human freight

around a bend a quarter of a mile distant, and then plunged into the timber and disappeared from view.

And Dick?

He was in imminent danger of being drowned, he thought, for he felt that at any moment the weight of his body might cause the log to turn and he would be plunged underneath the water and held there.

Nothing of the kind happened, however, and the youth then remembered that there were limbs reaching out at each side, and these kept the log steady and prevented it from rolling over.

Onward down the Roanoke River the youth floated.

He wondered if anyone would see and rescue him.

If what Black John had said was true there was not much likelihood that he would be rescued.

Still, he would not give up hope.

There was a chance that he would be seen and rescued.

More than an hour had elapsed, and Dick was beginning to feel very uncomfortable, when he thought he heard a human voice.

He listened intently, and presently heard it again.

There was no mistake about it this time; it was a human voice, and it sounded very much like the voice of a girl. It was not the voice of a man, at any rate, decided Dick, and he did not believe it was that of a boy.

As he had thought, it was a girl.

She stood on the bank of the river, shading her eyes with her hand and gazing toward him eagerly and earnestly.

Would she be able to see that he was a human being?

Presently the girl stooped, and seemed to be occupying herself untying shoe-strings—at least this was what Dick thought she was doing.

"Can it be possible that she is going to try to swim out to the log?" Dick asked himself.

Could she, a mere girl, swim?

He did not know, but he hoped that such might prove to be the case.

"Yes, she is going to enter the water!" Dick exclaimed to himself, presently, as he saw the girl walk down to the water's edge and enter.

The girl waded slowly in till the water was up almost to her neck, and then began swimming.

Dick watched her closely and anxiously, for he feared that she might not be equal to the task, it being at least two hundred yards from the shore to the log.

He was quickly reassured, however.

The girl swam strongly and confidently.

She was undoubtedly a good swimmer.

"Jove! that girl is all right!" thought Dick; "she is

almost as good a swimmer as I am myself. She'll get her all right, and I will be freed from this unpleasant predicament."

Closer and closer came the girl.

Soon she was within a few yards of him, and Dick, who was watching her closely and eagerly, said to himself that the sunburned and slightly freckled face of the girl was very pretty. But then it was the face of a deliverer, which may have made it look prettier to him than it otherwise might have done.

"Goodness!" exclaimed the girl as she drew near; "it's a man! And he's tied tight and fast, and gagged! That is terrible."

She came on till she was right beside the log, and then as she saw Dick's eyes fastened upon her face in gratitude and admiration, she blushed.

"I have no knife with which to cut the ropes binding you," she said, "so will guide the log in to the shore, and then set you free."

The youth nodded as best he could, and the girl at once began the somewhat difficult task of pushing the log in to the shore.

It was slow work, but she finally succeeded, and when she reached shallow water she walked to the shore, pulling the log after her.

Then she proceeded to free Dick, her first act being to remove the gag.

"Thank you!" mumbled Dick. He had been gagged so long that he could not speak plainly—could scarcely speak at all.

"Who has done this?" the girl asked, as she worked away at the ropes binding the youth to the log.

"Some scoundrels, whose leader called himself Black John," Dick managed to reply, his tongue having begun to feel more limber and normal-like.

"Black John's band?" exclaimed the girl; "they are bad men."

"You are right, miss; they are bad men, sure enough, and I shall try to even up matters with them for this unfair, one of these days!"

"Why did they do this?"

"They accused me of being a rebel."

"Ah, that accounts for it. They are Tories."

"Yes, and outlaws as well, I should judge."

"You are right, sir; they rob the people right and left."

"So I judged."

"How long have you been in the water, sir?"

"About an hour, I guess; though it seemed longer than that, owing to the uncomfortableness of my position."

"That is easily understood."

The girl worked rapidly, and five minutes later had succeeded in freeing Dick, who was so stiff and cramped in his joints that he was unable to stand unaided. The girl had steady him, and render him assistance as he walked up onto the shore. Here he took up a position against a tree, and rubbed his arms and legs until he got the blood circulating again, and then after he had taken a few turns up and down the shore a distance of a few yards he was all right.

"There," he said in a tone of great satisfaction; "I'm as good as new again. Miss, I thank you sincerely for what you have done for me."

"I do not wish any thanks, sir," with a smile and blush. "I am very glad that I happened to be here, and so was enabled to render you assistance."

"Well, you may be sure that I am glad. By the way, Miss, what is your name?"

"Mary Morgan, sir; and yours?"

"My name is Dick Slater."

The girl started, and looked at Dick searchingly and with considerable interest.

"Are you the Dick Slater who has made such a reputation in the North with his company of 'Liberty Boys'?" she asked.

"Yes, Miss Mary; at any rate I am the Dick Slater who was the captain of the 'Liberty Boys'."

"I am glad to know you, Mr. Slater," extending her little hand, which Dick grasped and pressed warmly.

"I have heard brother Tom speak of you many times. You see, Tom is in the patriot army, is a member of a Virginia regiment, and he is just now at home on a furlough, he having been wounded."

"Ah, that's the way you heard of me, is it?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I shall be glad to make the acquaintance of your brother Tom. He is at your home now, you say?"

"Yes, sir."

"How far is it from here?"

"About a mile."

"If you have no objections, I shall be glad to accompany you to your home."

"I shall be glad to have you come, sir," was the reply, and the look on the girl's face proved that she meant it.

"Very well; you see, I have lost my horse—those scoundrels shot him—and my weapons, and must get some more weapons before proceeding further on my way."

"Wait just a moment," said the girl, and stepping to the edge of the water, she pulled a forked stick out from

where it was sticking in the muddy bank, and lifted a string of fish which would have gladdened the heart of any one fond of piscatorial sport.

"So that is what you were doing here at the river?" remarked Dick, with a smile.

"Yes, sir."

"Let me carry the fish, Miss Mary."

The girl handed them to him, and then drew her line from the water, and winding it around the stick which she used for a pole, she went with the youth, guiding him through the timber.

Both were thoroughly soaked, but as the weather was warm, they were not very uncomfortable.

A walk of fifteen minutes brought them to a log house standing in the midst of the timber, and as they approached the house the door opened and a young man of about Dick's age stepped out, and seated himself on a rude bench on the porch.

"Hello, Sis!" he exclaimed. "Did one of those fish jerk you into the river?"

"That's Tom," said the girl in a low tone to Dick, and then aloud she called out:

"No, I didn't get jerked into the river, Tom; I entered it of my own accord." Then as they reached the porch, she went on: "Tom, this is Mr. Dick Slater, captain of 'The Liberty Boys of '76,' of whom I have heard you speak so often."

The young man was pale, and his left arm was in a sling, but he was a bright, handsome-looking fellow, and he leaped to his feet in excitement.

"What's that!" he cried, eyeing Dick searchingly; "you don't mean that, do you, Mary?"

"Yes, Tom; this is Mr. Slater, and he was set upon by Black John's band, and after they had shot his horse and taken his weapons and money, they tied him to a log, and set him adrift in the river. I saw him floating along, and swam out and pushed the log ashore and freed him."

"Well, well! I am glad to meet you, Mr. Slater!" cried the young man, offering his hand.

"And I am glad to meet you, Mr. Morgan," replied Dick, seizing the hand and shaking it heartily. "Your sister has told me that you are a patriot soldier, home on account of a wound."

"Yes, I got a musket-ball through my arm, and can't hold a musket, so had to come home for awhile. Well, come in the house and see mother. Father isn't at home."

"Where is he, Tom?" asked Mary.

"He went to Halifax after some groceries."

Halifax was a small cluster of houses hardly worthy the

name of a village, about two miles away, on the river, so Tom explained.

"Why, Mary Morgan!" exclaimed the girl's mother as they entered the house, "where have you been, and how did you get so wet?"

"In the river, mother," with a merry laugh.

"In the river!"

"Yes," and then the girl explained, and Tom broke in with: "This is Dick Slater, mother, of whom you've heard me speak lots of times. He's the captain of 'Liberty Boys,' you know."

"Yes, I've heard you speak of Dick Slater quite often, Tom," with a smile, and then the woman shook Dick's hand heartily.

"I'll go and put on dry clothing, mother, and then I'll come back and clean the fish for supper," said Mary, and she hastened away.

"Say, you're about my size," said Tom; "come to my room and you can have a suit of mine to put on while your own is drying."

"Thank you, Tom," said Dick. "I will feel better with a dry suit on, I am sure."

The two went upstairs to Tom's room, and Dick doffed his wet clothing and donned dry.

"There, I feel like a new man," he said with a sigh of satisfaction.

"I don't doubt it," agreed Tom.

"If I only had my weapons, now, I would be all right, Tom."

"I have some extra pistols and knives, Dick. You shall have some of them, if you wish."

"Thank you! I shall be very glad to accept of them, for I feel like a fish out of water without my weapons."

Tom opened a chest at one side of the room and drew forth two pistols and a knife, also a belt. These he handed to Dick.

"Here is ammunition, also," he said. "Now take as much as you want."

The youth did so, and soon had the pistols loaded, and placed in a belt, also the gift of Tom.

"You are a friend indeed, Tom, my boy!" said Dick. "I shall not soon forget the kindness of yourself and sister."

"Oh, that's all right," with a smile; "we are glad of the chance to do something for you."

They now made their way downstairs and to the sitting-room. A glance into the kitchen showed them that Mary was there, engaged in the work of dressing the fish.

"Come out on the porch; it is more pleasant out there," said Tom, and they went out and sat down.

"Where are your 'Liberty Boys,' Mr. Slater?" asked Tom.

"Call me Dick, Tom," said the "Liberty Boy."

"All right, Dick," was the prompt reply.

"Good! My 'Liberty Boys,' Tom, are about five miles back on the road. They went into camp, and will remain there until I get back. I came on ahead to do some scouting."

"So that is it?"

"Yes; you see, we heard rumors that Cornwallis and the British were advancing toward the Virginia line, and we wish to find out whether or not it is the case."

"Ah, I see; do you think there is any truth in the rumor?"

"I don't know. I hadn't secured any information up to the time Black John's band captured me, and of course they put a stop to my reconnoitering."

"Yes, but, say, Dick, this will be a good place for you to stay while making your scouting expeditions."

"Do you think so?"

"Yes; if the British are coming northward with a view to entering Virginia, they will come by the road which leads through Halifax, I am certain."

"And how far is it from your house to that road?"

"Only half a mile."

"Ah, that will be convenient to reach from here."

"Yes; if you will bring your 'Liberty Boys' here we will be glad to furnish you with provisions for them, and there is no better place for camping purposes anywhere around here, as we have a splendid spring here, which furnishes plenty of water."

"Then I shall take advantage of your offer, and do as you suggest. I will start for camp at once."

"You must wait till after supper, Dick. You are hungry, are you not?"

"Well, I am, come to think of it."

"So I judged; wait till after supper, and then you can have one of our horses, and it won't take you very long to reach the point where your 'Liberty Boys' are encamped."

"True, and that will suit me better than walking."

The youth remained to supper, and ate heartily. The fish was fine, and there was venison besides, which was good, and plenty of good bread and coffee. Dick enjoyed the meal very much, and while eating he and Tom explained what had been decided upon. Mary was delighted, but Mrs. Morgan looked grave.

"I'm afraid that the presence of a force of patriots here may get us into trouble, Tom," she said.

"It'll be more likely to keep us from getting into trouble"

mother," said Tom. "You see, if the British under Cornwallis really are coming through this part of the country, they will send out foraging parties constantly, and they would steal everything we have, and perhaps murder us, if not interfered with. With the 'Liberty Boys' near at hand they would not be allowed to do it."

"Your son is right, I think, Mrs. Morgan," said Dick; "if I was not sure that such is the case I would not for one moment think of coming here with my 'Liberty Boys,' for I would not for the world do anything to cause you folks to be endangered, after what Miss Mary and the rest have done for me."

"Oh, I am sure of that, Mr. Slater," the woman hastened to say. "I just spoke as the affair happened to strike me. I see now that your idea is the correct one."

"And if the British come foraging around here they will run against a snag!" cried Tom.

Mr. Morgan had not yet returned from Halifax when the meal was ended, and Dick did not wait to meet him. Tom and he went to the stable, and the youth bridled and saddled a horse, and took his departure, promising to be back just as soon as possible.

Tom had given him directions how to reach the road he had been on when captured by Black John's band, and once there he would have no difficulty in finding his way back to the encampment.

Dick had reached the main road leading toward Halifax, and had proceeded along it nearly a mile when he suddenly came upon an unusual scene on rounding a bend in the road.

CHAPTER IV

BLACK JOHN AGAIN.

A man was seated on the back of a horse and surrounding both was a party of men numbering eight, according to Dick's count. The man's hands were bound together behind his back, and around his neck was a rope, one end of which was thrown over a limb—the horse standing under a giant tree at the roadside.

It was dusk, but not so dark but that Dick could see what was going on quite plainly.

A thought came to him instantly, and that was that this man might be Mr. Morgan.

"In that case, I may be able to repay Miss Mary for what she did for me," thought Dick; "she freed me

from the log when I was drifting down the river, and now if I can save her father from hanging at the hands of these villains I will come near evening up the score."

While drawing his pistols and getting ready to take a hand in affairs, Dick listened to the conversation which was going on between the leader of the band and the man on horseback.

At first Dick had thought that this was Black John's band, but closer inspection showed him that it was not.

"It is just about such another gang, though, I am confident," he said, "and if I can kill one or two of them it will be no loss. I hope that I may be able to put them to flight. The odds are against me, but by taking them unawares I may be able to accomplish my purpose. If I can frighten them away for a few moments, just long enough to permit me to free the man, it will be all right."

The leader of the band, Dick learned by listening to the talk, was a Tory, and was trying to get the prisoner to take the oath of allegiance to the king. In speaking to the prisoner the fellow called him "Joe Morgan," so Dick knew the man really was Mary's father.

"I must rescue him," he said to himself. "I owe it to Mary, and I will rescue him, or die trying."

It was evident to Dick that the man did not intend to take the oath. "He has good backbone," the youth said, admiringly. "He is foolish in not taking the oath, however, and thus making sure of saving his life, for an oath, to such scoundrels, and obtained under such circumstances, would not be binding. If I was in his place, and thought there was no help near, I would take the oath, and then I would make it my especial business to hunt the scoundrels down and exterminate the band."

Seeing that the affair was nearing a climax, Dick made up his mind to act.

Just as the leader of the band of Tories was about to give the order for his men to lead the horse out from under its owner—which would have left him hanging at the end of the rope—Dick urged his horse forward at a gallop, and giving vent to a loud yell, fired once, twice into the crowd.

Coming so unexpectedly, the Tories were startled, and then, too, one of their number was killed by one of the bullets, and another was wounded, and they took to their heels, darting in among the trees.

"Quick; ride homeward as fast as you can!" cried Dick as he threw the noose off the man's neck and cut the rope binding his arms.

"Who are you?" the man cried, in surprise.

"I am one who is your friend, Joe Morgan, so do as I

tell you and ask no more questions. Tell your folks when you get home that Dick Slater saved you from the hands of the Tories, and then they will explain all to you."

"Very well. I will do so, but I don't understand——"

"Nor is there time for explanations. The Tories will be right back again in a few moments, eager for revenge. Hasten and make your way to your home. Good-bye," and Dick rode onward at a gallop.

Mr. Morgan recognized the fact that the young stranger had given him good advice, and urged his horse to a gallop, and rode onward till he reached his home.

He put his horse in the stable, and then went to the house. He told his folks the story of his capture by a band of Tories under the leadership of a man known as "Red" Rodney, owing to his red hair and beard, and when he told of how he had been rescued by a young man who said his name was Dick Slater, exclamations escaped his hearers.

"Oh, did Dick—Mr. Slater save you from Red Rodney, father?" exclaimed Mary.

"He is the boy who can do such work!" from Tom.

"I am glad he happened along just at the right time!" from Mrs. Morgan.

"You know him, then?" Mr. Morgan said in surprise.

"Yes, father," replied Mary, and then they explained, Mary telling how she had saved Dick Slater from possible death by rescuing him from his position on the log, after having been set drifting down the stream by the outlaws.

"Well, well! But he said you would explain."

"Yes; and he is going to bring his 'Liberty Boys' here, father," said Tom. "He has gone after them."

"Well, to tell the truth, I shall be rather glad to have him and his 'Liberty Boys' here, Tom. What with the two bands of Tory outlaws—Black John's and Red Rodney's—and the coming of the British under Cornwallis, we are likely to have lively times in these parts before long."

"Then you think it is really true that the British are coming, father?" asked Tom.

"It is so reported at Halifax, Tom."

"Well, as you say, then, there is going to be lively work around here before long."

Mr. Morgan sat up to the table and ate his supper, and had just finished when there came the sound of a knock on the door.

"Who is there?" called out Tom.

"It is me, Tom," came back the reply.

"Is it you, Dick Willis?"

"Yes; open the door and let me in. I have some information for you."

Tom lifted the bar down, and opened the door, and a handsome youth of perhaps twenty years entered.

He was a neighbor boy, and was greeted cordially by the members of the Morgan family, Mary's greeting being a bit warmer than what would have been expected of a mere friend, while there was a blush on her cheek and a peculiar happy light in her eyes which would have told the close observer that she was very, very glad to see Dick Willis.

"What's the news you said you had for us, Dick?" asked Tom.

"Black John's band is coming here!"

"What!"

"Black John's band coming here?"

"Why is it coming here, Dick?"

Such were the exclamations from the members of the Morgan household.

"I heard them talking; I was out in the timber, hunting, and happened upon them, and managed to get close enough to hear what was said without their knowing I was in the vicinity, and I heard them say that they were going to come here some time to-night and make you, Mr. Morgan, take the oath of allegiance to the king."

"So that's what they are going to try to do, is it?" the man remarked, grimly.

"Yes; at least, that is what they said."

"That will be the second gang, to-night, that has tried to make me take the oath."

"Is that so?" asked Dick in surprise.

"Yes," and then Mr. Morgan explained.

"Well, I hope Black John will put off coming here till after Dick Slater and his 'Liberty Boys' get here," said Tom.

"Dick Slater and his 'Liberty Boys'?" remarked Dick Willis, inquiringly.

"Yes."

"Who are they?"

Tom hastened to explain, and when Dick learned that there would be plenty of help there for Mr. Morgan's folks he was delighted. He was deeply in love with Mary, and had feared that she might be forced to see her father mistreated, and even murdered by the Tories.

Dick Willis remained there two hours, at least, talking, and when at last he rose to take his leave he gave a start, and, placing his hand to his ear, listened.

"I hear the sound of footsteps!" he said in a low voice. "I have no doubt it is Black John's band. Had you not better put out the light?"

This suggestion was acted upon at once, Mary blowing out the candle and leaving them in darkness.

Then they heard the footsteps plainly, and a few moments later there came a knock on the door.

Mr. Morgan thought it best to not let on that he heard it first, so he made no reply.

There was a brief silence, and then there came the knock once more.

Rat-tat-tat!

Still Mr. Morgan made no reply. He wished to make the Tories think that the members of the household were in bed and asleep.

Rat-tat-tat-tat!

The rapping was louder this time, and following it came a loud voice, which called out:

"Hello, in there! Hello, I say!"

"Hello, yourself!" retorted Mr. Morgan, who felt that the time had come to say something.

"Oho, ye're not all dead in there, after all, hey?" came the voice in ironical tones.

"No, but we were asleep."

"Asleep, hey?"

"Yes; what do you mean by coming here and rousing up the best people in this fashion?"

"I mean business, friend Morgan, as you will soon find out."

"Who are you?"

"Who am I?"

"Yes."

"D'ye really want to know?"

"Well, I don't care particularly about it; if you will just go off about your business and let me go to sleep again, I will not insist on an answer to the question, for I don't care who you are."

"Oh, you don't, hey?"

"No."

"Well, I rather think you will care, before we get rough with you. I will just inform you that I am Black John."

"Black John, you say?"

"Yes."

"Well, what do you want here?"

"We want you!"

"Me?"

"Yes; so open up the door at once."

"Why should I do that?"

"Because I say so."

"I do not see that I am bound to obey you."

"You will see it, readily enough, I reckon."

"I don't think so."

"You will when I tell you that all my men are here with

me, a score of brave fellows, and we are not disposed to brook any nonsense on your part; so the best thing you can do is to open the door."

"You must delay them as long as possible, father," whispered Tom; "so as to give Dick Slater and his 'Liberty Boys' time to get here."

"Yes, Tom," whispered his father in reply. Aloud he said, in answer to Black John's last words:

"I don't see why I should open the door; I have no desire to see you or have anything to do with you."

"Oh, you haven't, hey?"

"No."

"Well, we have a very strong desire to see you, and have a talk with you."

"Why so?"

"That does not matter; open the door, and then we will explain fully."

"I don't think I shall do anything of the kind," said Mr. Morgan.

"You mean to say that you refuse to open the door?" The tone was angry and threatening.

"Yes."

"You are very foolish."

"I don't think so."

"I know so; if you don't open the door we will break it down."

"You would not dare do that."

"Bah! you don't know Black John if you think he would not dare do anything he makes up his mind to do."

"But why are you so anxious to see and talk to me?"

"That I will explain, just as soon as you open the door."

"Explain it now, and then if I think your business with me is of sufficient importance I will open the door."

"I know my business is of importance, so I command you to open the door at once."

"See here, Black John; why not be reasonable?"

"Reasonable. How?"

"Why, by telling me why you wish to see me."

"I don't like that way of doing. When I talk business to a man I don't want it to be through a door."

"Well, it will suit me to have it that way, so go ahead and explain your business."

"I won't do it! For the last time, Joe Morgan, open the door!"

"See here, Black John," said Mr. Morgan, warningly; "if you break my door down it will be bad for you."

"Bah! What will happen?"

"Considerable."

"What, for instance?"

"Well, you and some of your men will get hurt."

"Oh, we will, hey?"

"Yes."

"You don't mean to say that you will show fight?"

"That is just what I mean."

"You will be the biggest kind of a fool if you do that."

"Why so?"

"Because we will kill every one of you if you so much as give one of us a scratch-wound."

"Perhaps you will, and perhaps you won't. There are more of us in here than you think."

"Bah! how many are there of you?"

"You will find out if you break the door down."

"There is nobody there extra save your boy, Tom, and he is wounded."

"You will find that you are mistaken. I would advise you to go about your business, if you have any, and let me alone."

"My business just now is to make you open the door and show yourself, friend Morgan."

"That I refuse to do."

"All right, then; come, boys, lend me the use of your shoulders here. We will soon burst this door down."

Mr. Morgan had kept the outlaws waiting for quite a while, but felt that it would be impossible to do so longer, and so he whispered to his wife and daughter to go upstairs, and told Tom and Dick to have their weapons in readiness.

"Fire the instant the door falls!" he instructed them, "and shoot to kill."

The youths replied that they would, and Mary, like the brave girl that she was, said that she would stay and help fight the outlaws.

"I have a pair of pistols," she said, "and as you all know, I know how to use them. I will stay and help you repel the scoundrels."

"You must run upstairs immediately after firing the two shots, Mary," said her father, and she promised to do so.

Suddenly they were startled by the sound of musket-shots, followed by yells and curses—the latter coming from Black John and his men undoubtedly. Following this sounded the patter of running feet.

CHAPTER V.

DICK WILLIS A PRISONER.

Dick did not have much difficulty in finding his way to where his "Liberty Boys" were encamped. He arrived

there an hour after parting from Mr. Morgan, and greeted joyously by the youths.

"We thought you had been captured, Dick!" said Estabrook, Dick's dearest and best friend.

"Or that you had got lost," from Mark Morrison.

"I didn't get lost, but I did get captured," said Dick.

This excited the youths at once, and they uttered exclamations.

"You were captured?"

"Who by?"

"Were your captors redcoats?"

"Tell us about it, Dick."

"All right, I will," and then Dick went ahead and told the story of his capture by Black John's band, and how he had been sent floating down the Roanoke River on a raft, and how he had been rescued by Mary Morgan.

The youths listened with great attention and considerable excitement, and uttered exclamations occasionally.

"Jove, you had a narrow escape, didn't you!" exclaimed Bob, when Dick had finished.

"Yes, it wasn't a pleasant experience," agreed Dick, "but for Mary Morgan I might have lost my life."

"True; she is the right kind of a girl!" cried Sanderson.

"And now," said Dick, "we will break camp and move our way over to Mr. Morgan's house. It will be a good place to camp, and they have promised me provisions for all."

"That will be all right," said Bob.

"Yes, and we will be close to the road leading through Halifax, the village on the river, through which the Brigadier will pass in going up into Virginia, and it will give me a good opportunity for keeping watch."

The "Liberty Boys" proceeded to break camp at once, and in a short time were ready to start.

Dick took the lead, as he knew the way, and they moved steadily for an hour.

"We are almost there," said Dick, and the youths were glad to hear this, for they were beginning to feel sleepy.

Presently they came in sight of the house, and as the moon was shining they caught sight of the band of outlaws standing in front of the door.

"I'll wager that is Black John's band!" said Dick, and the youths had come to a halt in obedience to a signal from him. "If such is the case, we will ride down upon them and give them a volley, for they cannot be here for good."

He leaped to the ground and stole forward to the fence, and after reconnoitering and listening a few minutes

tes, returned with the information that it was indeed Black John's band.

Mounting his horse he said: "Follow me, and when you get to the fence give the scoundrels a volley!"

Forward the youths rode at a walk, for they wished to take the enemy by surprise. One of the outlaws happened to catch sight of them just before they reached the fence, however, and gave the alarm, the scoundrels suddenly scattering and starting to run.

"Fire!" cried Dick, and the "Liberty Boys" obeyed.

Crash—roar! the volley rang out, and although it was evident that several of the outlaws were wounded, not one was killed. The youths had fired while their horses were in motion, which had made their aim uncertain; and, too, the outlaws were leaping hither and thither, and running, and this made it a difficult matter to fire to good advantage.

The outlaws quickly disappeared, and the "Liberty Boys" proceeded to dismount, Dick hastening to the house, the door of which opened as he reached it.

"I knew it was you," said Tom Morgan; "you got here just in time, Dick."

"I judge that you are right, Tom," was the reply; "what did Black John's band want?"

"They wanted me to open the door and come out where they could see me," said Mr. Morgan. "I think that they intended to try to make me take the oath of allegiance to the king, or kill me."

"Well, I'll tell you what I would do, if pinned down to it again, as you were when I came upon you a few hours ago, Mr. Morgan," said Dick; "I would take the oath without any hesitancy, making a mental reservation, and then I would make it my business to do all I could to get even with the scoundrels. An oath, taken under such circumstances, and administered by such arrant scoundrels, should not be held binding at all."

"True," agreed Mr. Morgan; "but I hate to give in to such villains."

"It would be better to do so than to let them take your life, sir; more especially as you could more than get even with them later on."

"Well, I will take the oath next time rather than run the risk of losing my life. By the way, are all your men on hand now, Mr. Slater?"

"Yes, sir; we are all here."

"Good! You may camp wherever you choose."

"Come with me, Dick," said Tom; "I will show you the best place in the world for a camp."

Tom led the way to a point back of the barnyard, to a little pasture-lot, in which grew numerous large trees.

There was plenty of grass for the horses in the timber near at hand, and the trees in the lot would furnish the youths all the shade they could desire.

"This will do nicely," said Dick, and he sent Tom back to show the "Liberty Boys" how to reach the spot.

Ten minutes later the youths were hard at work, going into camp, and half an hour later they were as much at home as if they had been there a week.

Dick stationed sentinels, and then told Tom he might as well go to the house and to bed.

"Tell your folks to go to sleep, and fear nothing," he said. "If Black John and his band, or Red Rodney and his gang come fooling around, they will meet with a reception that will effectually discourage them from ever attempting it again."

"All right, and thank you, Dick. Jove! I don't know what might have been the result had you not come and put Black John's band to flight. We could have killed a few of the scoundrels, but they were too many for us, and we would soon have been at their mercy."

"Well, you will be in no danger from them again so long as we remain here."

Tom made his way to the house, and told his folks what Dick had said.

"That makes me feel much easier in mind," said Mrs. Morgan. "I hope that Dick Slater and his 'Liberty Boys' may remain long enough to break up the two bands of Tories and scatter the members in every direction."

"It would be better to kill the villains," said Tom, "and the 'Liberty Boys' won't hesitate to do it, either, if the scoundrels come fooling around here again."

Dick Willis, who had remained in order to talk to Mary, now bade them good-night and took his departure, being cautioned by Mary to keep a sharp lookout as he went. "If those villains should get hold of you they might murder you, Dick!" she said nervously.

"Perhaps it would be best for you to stay all night, Dick," said Mr. Morgan.

"Yes, stay, Dick," said Tom, but the youth shook his head.

"I hurried off without telling the folks where I was bound for," he said, "and if I should not return they would be uneasy."

"Well, do be very, very careful, Dick, and don't let those terrible men get hold of you," said Mary, and Dick laughingly said that he would not.

Then he took his departure, and had made his way through the timber a distance of nearly half a mile when of a sudden he found himself surrounded by nearly a score

of dark forms. They had risen up almost as suddenly as thought, and with almost absolute noiselessness.

"Great Guns! I'm in for it, I guess!" thought Dick Willis. "This is Black John's band!"

He was right, and the next moment he found himself confronted by the redoubtable Black John himself.

"You are Dick Willis, aren't you?" the outlaw asked, sternly.

"Yes, that's my name," the youth replied.

"Humph. I thought so. And you are on your way home from Joe Morgan's."

"Yes."

"You were there all the time we were trying to get Morgan to open the door."

"Yes, sir."

"Humph. Did you know that a band of men was coming?"

"No."

"Did Morgan know it?"

"I guess not, sir."

"Bah! I believe he did, and I shall make it my business to get even with Joe Morgan."

The youth said nothing, and then Black John asked:

"What gang was that that attacked us, anyway?"

The youth shook his head.

"I don't know, sir," he said. He did know, but made up his mind he would not give the outlaw chief any information if he could help it.

"I believe you are lying, Dick Willis!" Black John's tone was stern.

"No, I am telling the truth, sir," the youth declared. He said to himself that it was no harm speaking falsely to the Tory leader.

"I don't believe you; but that is all right. I will soon find out who the scoundrels are, and as for you, we will just hold you a prisoner for awhile, and then probably shoot you."

"Hold me a prisoner?" the youth exclaimed.

"Yes."

"But why? I have done nothing to you."

"Yes you have. You were in Morgan's house, and would have fought against us if we had broken the door down. You are an enemy, and shall be treated as one; and besides, you are in love with Morgan's daughter Mary, and I will have you with you, and I can strike them a blow through you."

"I beg of you not to hold me a prisoner," said Dick. "My folks do not know where I am, and they will be uneasy if I do not come back."

"I can't help that; that's your fault, not mine. Tie his

hands together behind his back, boys, and then bring him along."

The men obeyed the command, and Dick's hands were tied together behind his back, in spite of his protests. Then he was hurried along in the midst of the Tories.

They continued onward for more than half an hour, and then came to a cabin located in a deep ravine where they ran through the timber at this point.

The cabin was built right against the wall of the ravine, and when they had entered Dick saw that the room tended back much deeper than the cabin proper, which proved that quite a large chamber had been excavated from the face of the ravine-wall.

"You may lie down wherever you like," said Black John, "and get some sleep, if you can bring yourself to that point."

"I don't feel much like sleeping," said Dick Willis bitterly.

The outlaw chief laughed, as if amused, but said nothing.

Those of the outlaws who had been wounded by the "Liberty Boys" bullets now proceeded to look after the wounds, and it was found that no one was dangerously wounded. Two or three of the wounds were quite painful, however, and the owners of these gave utterance to curses not loud, but deep.

"I'd like er chance ter git squar' with the fellers ez doing this!" growled one.

"Me, too!" from another. "I wonder who they kin be?"

"Dunno; theer looked ter be erbout er hunderd uv 'em didn' ye think?"

"Yes; I don't see who they can be."

"I'll tell ye who I think they are," said Black John.

"Who?" in chorus.

"I think it's a party of rebel soldiers dressed in citizen's clothes."

"But whar air they frum, cap'n, ef thet's ther case?"

"From up around Richmond, likely."

"Ye think so?"

"Yes; ye see, Lafayette is up there with a little army, and likely he has sent this band down here to take a look at the country and see if there are any British in this vicinity."

"A sort of scouting party, hey?"

"Yes, and if we play our cards right, we will be able to cause the capture of the scoundrels."

"How is thet?"

"Why, ye know, they say Cornwallis is coming north-

ard with his army, and will be in this part of the country on."

"So we've heard."

"Well, if that gang that attacked us to-night stays round here till the British get close we can go down and tell the British about the party of rebels, and Cornwallis will send a force up here and capture them."

"That'd be all right."

"So it would, and it is just what we will try to bring out."

The prisoner, Dick Willis, heard all this, of course, and thought that if he could only escape, he would carry the information regarding this matter to Dick Slater, who could then be enabled to defeat Black John's plans.

"I fear it will be a difficult matter to free myself, however," the youth thought. "I am bound, and there will always be some of the scoundrels around in all likelihood." However, he did not give up to a feeling of despair. He is a brave young fellow, and was determined to watch his chances and make an effort to escape at the first favorable opportunity.

CHAPTER VI.

SPYING.

The "Liberty Boys" were early astir next morning, and after breakfast Dick began laying his plans. He sent a party of four of the youths over to the main road, with instructions to keep a sharp lookout for the coming of the British army.

While he and Bob and two or three more of the youths were talking the matter over, Tom Morgan came running in the house, and called Dick to one side.

"You remember the young fellow, Dick Willis, who was our house when you came last night, Dick?" he remarked.

"Yes, what of him, Tom?" Dick asked, for he knew by his looks that something had happened.

"Why, he left here soon after you went into camp, last night. He started for home, but he didn't get there!"

"He did not?"

"No."

"How do you know?"

"His sister Nellie came over a few minutes ago, and told

"Ah, that's how you know."

"Yes. She says they were not much alarmed that he had not come home at first, but when breakfast time came and still he had not come they got worried, and she came over to see if he was here."

"Well, well; that is strange—his not reaching his home, I mean."

"So it is. I'll tell you what I think, Dick."

"What?"

"That he has been captured by Black John's band."

"Likely you are right, Tom."

"I think so; and now the question is, What shall we do?"

"Why, as he is a friend of your family, and I am indebted to your folks—especially to your sister, who is, so I judge, the young man's sweetheart—I shall make it my business to try to effect the young man's rescue."

"Thank you, Dick. I'll go and tell the girls at once. It will relieve their minds."

"I'll go with you, Tom."

The two hastened to the house, where the girls were found, looking very pale and disturbed. Tom introduced Dick to Miss Nellie Willis, and then the young "Liberty Boy" proceeded to speak reassuringly to the perturbed maidens.

"I shall divide my 'Liberty Boys' up into parties of fifteen or twenty and send them out to hunt for the hiding-place of the outlaws," he said; "and once found, we will quickly effect the rescue of your brother, Miss Willis."

"Oh, I hope and trust that you may do so, Mr. Slater!" said the girl.

"Yes, indeed!" from Mary.

"We will do the best we can, and I assure you that all the members of my company are expert woodsmen, and understand all the ins and outs of work such as they will be called upon to do. If the outlaws' hiding-place is within five miles of here we should be able to find it during the day."

"Oh, I hope that you may succeed!" cried Nellie.

"Yes, yes!" from Mary.

"Well, rest easy," said Dick. "I think that we shall have good news for you before evening."

Then Dick went back to the encampment and told the boys what he wished to do. He sent the four scouts over to keep watch on the main road for the coming of the British army, and left six in the encampment, and the remaining members were divided up into searching parties of fifteen each.

These parties at once set out, each going in a different direction, and it was understood that a messenger from each

party was to return to the encampment every hour to report progress. In this manner they would know if the outlaws' hiding-place was found by either party, and all the other parties could proceed to the spot, when it would be an easy matter to force the Tories to surrender and effect the rescue of Dick Willis.

The parties of "Liberty Boys" made thorough work of it, but up to noon had not succeeded in finding the hiding-place of the outlaws.

"We'll keep right at it, however," said Dick to the girls, he having come back to the encampment of messengers at the noon hour. "I feel confident that we will discover where Dick is secreted before evening."

"Oh, I hope so," breathed Nellie, who had gone home to tell her folks the news and then returned.

"I pray that you may succeed, Mr. Slater," said Mary. "Oh, wouldn't it be terrible if—if——" She could get no further, and broke down.

"I don't think there is the least danger that they have harmed him, Miss Mary," said Dick; "they are without doubt holding him a prisoner. I would not worry a moment on that score, if I were you, for I have not the least doubt that Dick is alive and well at this very moment."

"Oh, I am so glad to hear you say that!"

The young commander of the "Liberty Boys" went back to his party and the search was prosecuted with vigor until nearly four o'clock, without having found any signs which would indicate the hiding-place of the Tories, and then the messenger who had gone to the encampment to report brought Dick some important news.

"The British are coming, Dick!" he said.

"Is that so?" the youth cried eagerly.

"Yes, one of the scouts you stationed on the main road was at the encampment, and told me to tell you that they had sighted the British."

"Good! I'm glad of that. I suppose they are quite a ways off yet."

"Yes; he guessed them to be about eight miles away—that is, the advance guard, which was what they saw, of course."

The youth pondered a few minutes.

"The British will just about go into camp somewhere in this vicinity," he said, finally; "well, I will put in another hour looking for the hiding-place of the outlaws, and then will come to the encampment and begin getting ready to keep track of the British."

An hour later having failed to find the hiding-place of the Tory outlaws, Dick and his party returned to the encampment. He was sorry for the girls, who looked at

him eagerly and questioningly. It was hard to tell them that he had not been successful, but it had to be done.

"There are five more parties searching, however, girls, as you know, and one or the other of them may find the outlaws' hiding-place. You must bear up and be brave. Don't give way to a feeling of despair, for I think some of my men will be successful; and even if we fail to-day we may succeed to-morrow."

"But Dick may be—dead—to-morrow," faltered Nellie.

"I am confident that you need fear nothing of the sort, Miss Nellie," said Dick. "I can see no reason why they would kill your brother."

Having said all he could to comfort the girls, Dick made his way to the main road, and climbed the tree in which two of his scouts were perched.

He reached a position beside the youths, and then looked toward the south. There, sure enough, toiling along, seemingly at a snail's pace, was what had the appearance of a long, writhing serpent of a scarlet hue.

"That is Cornwallis' army, sure enough," exclaimed Dick.

"Yes," it's the British," agreed Mark Morrison, one of the scouts.

"I shall wait till they go into camp, this evening, and then I will find out as nearly as is possible how many men Cornwallis has, and then I will despatch a messenger to Lafayette with the information that the British really are coming North, and how many there are."

"Yes, that will be a good plan, Dick. Then Lafayette will know what he will have to contend against."

"Yes. But, Mark, I can't understand why Cornwallis is coming up here, when General Greene is down in the Carolinas."

"I don't understand that, either."

"It is a very strange affair."

"So it is; it may be, however, that Cornwallis has some deep plan in so doing."

"That is possible, for he is a good general."

"Yes."

"And that makes it all the more necessary that I should get word to Lafayette as soon as possible, so that he may know just what he will have to contend with."

"Yes, and he may be able to secure some recruits while waiting for Cornwallis to put in an appearance,"

"You are right."

Dick remained up in the tree for nearly an hour, and then, it being near supper time, and the British being within a mile and a half of them, he descended and made his way back to the "Liberty Boys" encampment.

At the Morgan home no news had been received regarding Dick Willis, and Nellie and Mary were looking very pale and troubled.

"Don't worry," said Dick to them. "Dick is alive and well, you may be sure. And we will find and rescue him sooner or later."

The girls said they hoped that such would be the case, but it was plain that they were greatly troubled by fears that he might not be found and rescued.

The news that Cornwallis and his army was close at hand was not very pleasing or reassuring to Mr. Morgan, for he feared that it meant trouble for himself and family.

All the searching parties came in just before dark, and none of them had been successful. They had looked high and low for the hiding-place of the outlaws, but had been unable to find it.

"Never mind," said Dick to the girls. "We'll keep up the search to-morrow, and will find the Tories' hiding-place sure."

One of the scouts that had been left over at the main road had brought the information that the British army had gone into camp half a mile south of where the scouts were in hiding, and as soon as it was dark Dick started to go on a reconnoitering tour.

He reached the main road, had a brief talk with the scouts, and then stole away in the direction of the British encampment.

"It will be dangerous venturing near their camp," he said to himself, "but this is as good an opportunity as I will have, without a doubt."

The youth moved slowly and cautiously forward, for he did not know what moment he might run upon a British sentinel.

Nearer and nearer to the British lines he drew, and every few moments he paused and listened earnestly, and strained his eyes to catch some glimpse of the enemy.

Presently, when he was confident that he must be within a short distance of the British encampment, he heard the footsteps of a sentinel, and just had time to crouch down behind some underbrush at the side of the road when he saw the sentinel appear from among the trees at the farther side.

The sentinel, as Dick saw, would pass within a couple of yards of where the "Liberty Boy" was hidden, and he made up his mind to attempt a bold scheme.

As the sentinel passed Dick the youth rose to his feet, at the same instant drawing his pistol and reversing it so as to hold the weapon by the barrel, and crept close up behind the unsuspecting man.

Thud.

The youth struck the sentinel a severe blow with the heavy pistol-butt, and the redcoat sank to the ground with a gurgling groan which could not have been heard far.

Nevertheless Dick dropped to the ground with almost as much suddenness as had been the case with the redcoat, and he crouched there for half a minute, listening. Then, hearing nothing, he became satisfied that the redcoat's groan had not been heard, and rising, he stepped to the stricken man's side, and taking hold of his arms dragged him into the deep shadow of the trees.

The youth had decided upon his course, and did not hesitate.

He quickly removed the redcoat's outer clothing, and then bound the fellow's arms and legs, and gagged him.

This done, Dick doffed his own outer clothing and donned the British uniform. Next he went back up the road a hundred yards, and concealed his clothing behind a tree, where he knew he would be able to find it again.

"Now, then, I am a full-fledged British soldier so far as looks go," the youth said to himself. "The next thing is to enter the encampment."

This would be a very dangerous undertaking, but Dick did not hesitate.

It would not be the first time he had taken his life in his hands in the furtherance of the interests of the great cause.

Forward he stole, until he was in the edge of the timber, and only a few yards distant from the outer edge of the encampment.

He paused here to make an observation.

He saw that the camp was quite a large one, and judged that there must be quite a large force.

"I must find out as nearly as is possible how many there are," he said to himself, "and if possible I must find out what the intentions of the British are."

After thinking the matter over he decided that the best course would be to walk boldly into the encampment, just as if he were one of the soldiers who had wandered out into the timber and was coming back.

Having made his decision, Dick left his hiding-place and walked slowly and deliberately into the encampment.

There were only two or three camp-fires, and these were so far apart that they did not light up a very large area, and so Dick was not exposed to light that would make discovery likely. In the darkness he would be taken for one of the soldiers.

This was the way he reasoned, and the results proved that his judgment was good. No one did more than glance at him; none asked him any questions.

A few were strolling about the encampment, and this made it better for Dick, as he was not so noticeable as he otherwise would have been.

He was very much on the alert, however, for he did not know what moment an accident might reveal the fact that he was not a British soldier, but a patriot spy.

The youth wandered around, taking in everything with his keen eyes, and it did not take him long to decide which of the several tents was occupied by General Cornwallis.

He saw two or three men enter the tent in question, it being a very large one, and he decided that the men were officers and that likely a council was being held.

"Now, if I only could get close up behind the tent and conceal myself, I would be able to hear everything that was said," thought Dick. "I will watch my chance and make the attempt."

He was very deliberate in his movements, for he knew that to appear hasty or nervous would be to attract attention to himself, and ten minutes later he had succeeded in getting close up behind the tent, on the side farthest from the main portion of the encampment, and lying there with his ear almost against the cloth, he was enabled to hear every word that was spoken within.

As Dick had suspected, a council was being held, and the officers were talking over their plans and outlining their intended movements.

The youth, of course, listened with eager interest, and made mental note of all important items of information. He learned that the British army was headed for Petersburg, Virginia, a town perhaps twenty miles south of Richmond, where Lafayette was stationed.

"We will take up our quarters in Petersburg," said a voice which Dick recognized as being that of Cornwallis, "and then we will begin a campaign against Lafayette which will soon have the effect of driving him back toward the north, I am certain."

The other officers said they thought this would be a good plan of procedure, and the details of the intended operations were discussed, much to Dick's satisfaction.

"I am much obliged to you, gentlemen, for talking the matter over so thoroughly," thought Dick. "I am gaining just the information that I wished to gain."

Presently there was a stir within the tent, and Dick, who was on the alert, learned that some unexpected person had put in an appearance.

"I wonder who it can be?" the youth asked himself, "and is it someone that suspects my presence in the camp, or even knows of it? Can it be that the redcoat whose uniform I am wearing has been discovered and has come

here with the information? I hope not, for that might make it rather awkward for me."

"Well, sir, who, if I may ask, are you?" Dick heard the sharp, incisive voice of General Cornwallis ask.

"My name is Bender, sir," was the reply, in a voice which Dick recognized.

"It is Black John, the leader of the band of Tory outlaws," said Dick to himself. "Now what does that scoundrel want here?"

CHAPTER VII.

DISCOVERED.

The man who had been ushered into the tent of General Cornwallis was indeed Black John, the leader of the outlaws.

"Well, Mr. Bender, what can I do for you?" asked Cornwallis, surveying the man searchingly.

"You can't do anything for me, sir, that I know of," was the reply.

"No? Then why are you here?"

"I have come to do something for you."

"Ah, that's it?"

"Yes, sir."

General Cornwallis surveyed the man closely, as did the other officers as well.

"Well" after a few moments, "what can you do for me?"

"I think I can give you some information that will please you."

"You do?"

"Yes."

"Humph. First tell me, what are you?—a loyalist?"

"I am, sir. I am the leader of a band of loyalists like myself, and am known as 'Black John, the Tory.'"

"Black John, the Tory, eh?"

"Yes."

"How many men have you in your band?"

"Sixteen."

"You live in these parts—you and your men?"

"We do."

"And you know the lay of the land for miles around, no doubt?"

"I do, sir."

"That is good; no doubt you will be of value to me. But what is the nature of the information which you say you have for me?"

"It is in regard to a band of men who are in this vicinity, and who, so I think, are rebel soldiers."

Dick, of course, heard this, and gave a start.

"Ha! So that is what Mr. Black John is here for, eh?" he said to himself. "He is going to tell Cornwallis about myself and 'Liberty Boys.'"

"A band of men in this vicinity, and you think them rebels?"

"Yes."

"How many of these men are there?"

"About one hundred."

"One hundred, eh?"

"Yes."

"Do they wear uniforms?"

"No, sir."

"Dress in citizen's clothing, do they?"

"They do."

"How do they travel—on foot or on horseback?"

"On horseback."

"Ha! A company of rebel cavalry, no doubt," with a glance at his brother officers, who nodded their heads in assent.

"Likely they have come down here from Richmond, and belong to Lafayette's force," suggested one.

"Quite likely," agreed Cornwallis. "And you say this party is in this vicinity?" again turning his eyes on Black John.

"They are, sir."

"Are they where we could get at them to-night?"

"Yes, that's the reason I have come to you. I thought you might wish to capture them, and so have come with the purpose of guiding you to the spot where they are camped, if you wish it."

"You are very kind, Black John," said Dick to himself, grimly. "If I get the chance I shall try to prove to you that I appreciate the interest which you seem to take in my welfare and that of my brave 'Liberty Boys'!"

"You know where these rebels are, then?" asked the British general.

"Yes. I know the exact spot where they have their encampment."

"How far is it from here?"

"Scarcely more than a mile."

"Ha! say you so?"

"Yes."

"Well, that is indeed good. We will make arrangements to effect the capture of the rebels."

General Cornwallis was silent for a few moments, during

which time he was busy thinking, and then he turned to one of the officers and asked:

"How many men, do you think, had we better take for this enterprise?"

"Oh, I should think that two hundred would be a sufficient number," was the reply.

"Yes, that should be a sufficient number, unless it should happen that this force is an extremely dangerous one."

The general turned again to Black John.

"Have you any idea who the men may be?—whether any special force that has ever been heard of, as Marion's men, or Sumpter's men, or anything like that?" he asked.

Black John at first shook his head, and then said as an afterthought: "One of my scouts, while out scouting around to-day, ran across a portion of the force in question, and he heard one of the fellows call the other a 'Liberty Boy'—but I suppose that didn't mean anything."

Cornwallis started, and gave utterance to an exclamation.

"You say he heard one call another a 'Liberty Boy'?" he asked in some excitement.

The other officers, too, much to Black John's surprise, manifested considerable interest and excitement.

"Yes, that is what my scout said."

"Humph!" exclaimed Cornwallis, and then he asked: "Have you seen those men, Mr. Bender?"

"Yes, I've seen them."

"Very good. I wish to ask you a question: Were they all young fellows of seemingly about twenty years of age?"

Black John started, and looked at the general quickly and wonderingly.

"Come to think of it, they were," he replied.

"All young fellows, eh?"

"Yes."

"But bronzed, tough-looking fellows?"

"Yes."

General Cornwallis looked at his officers significantly and nodded.

"I thought so. I guess you had better take four hundred men, Major Tarleton."

The officer addressed nodded assent.

"I think so, sir, if the party is, as you think, the 'Liberty Boys.'"

"I have not the least doubt regarding the matter."

"I think that is who they are, myself."

"Yes, the description fits them exactly."

"So it does; and the fact that one was heard address another as a 'Liberty Boy' is corroborative evidence sufficient, I think."

"Indeed, yes; and Major Tarleton, if we can effect the capture of the 'Liberty Boys,' we will be doing a splendid thing for the king's cause."

"Indeed we will, sir. They have done a great deal of harm in their day."

"Yes, and will do more unless something happens to put an end to their work."

"Well, I think that 'something will happen' this day, if the gentleman, there, can do what he says—guide us to the encampment of the enemy."

"I can and will, sir."

"Very good."

"But who and what are the 'Liberty Boys,' sir, if I may ask?" asked Black John, whose curiosity was aroused.

"That is very easily explained, Mr. Bender," said General Cornwallis. "The 'Liberty Boys' consists of a company of young men who go by that name, and they have made themselves famous throughout the North by their wonderful fighting, and they have operated to some extent in the South. Have you never heard of them?"

Black John shook his head.

"No, I never have," he replied. "At least, never before to-night."

"Well, the 'Liberty Boys' have done the king's cause more damage than any other entire rebel regiment, and if we succeed in capturing them to-night, through your aid and the information which you have given us you shall be rewarded."

"Thank you, sir."

Black John was well pleased. He found that he had brought much more important information than he had suspected was the case, and felt elated as a result.

Just at this instant the orderly stuck his head into the tent, and called out, in some excitement:

"One of the sentinels has just come into camp, sir, and he says he was knocked down by a blow from behind, and that when he came to he was bound hand and foot and gagged, and his uniform had been stripped off him. He was accidentally found by one of our men, and will be here to report to you as soon as he dons another uniform."

"That is the work of Dick Slater, the captain of the 'Liberty Boys'!" cried General Cornwallis, leaping to his feet in excitement. "He is the most daring and fearless rebel spy alive, and I will wager that he is within the confines of this encampment at this very moment! Quick! sound the alarm, and have every avenue of escape guarded. If we can capture him before he gets away it will be a big feather in our cap, for he is worth a score of common men."

Dick had remained long enough to hear this, and then was on the point of rising and stealing away and making his escape when he felt some one seize him in a strong grasp.

The youth had been so intent on what was going on within the tent that a soldier had managed to slip up close to the youth without attracting his attention. The soldier had seen Dick steal up behind the tent, and had suspected that there was something wrong. He had made no haste, however, but had taken his time, and had stolen forward very slowly and cautiously. He had been close enough to hear the words of General Cornwallis, and the idea had suddenly came to him that this might be Dick Slater, the spy in question.

"If so, and I can effect his capture, it will be a big feather in my cap, and may win me promotion," he told himself, and with this thought uppermost in his mind, he leaped upon Dick, and attempted to make him a prisoner.

Had he not wished to win the credit of making the capture alone and unaided, Dick would have undoubtedly been captured, for a single yell from the soldier who had leaped upon him would have brought a horde of soldiers to his assistance; but he did not give vent to the yell, or cry for assistance, and this gave Dick a chance.

Evidently the redcoat had supposed that he would have no difficulty in capturing the spy when he had succeeded in taking him at such a disadvantage, but he did not know Dick Slater. Had Dick been only an ordinary man he would have succumbed, but he was an extraordinary youth, and was so strong and agile that he was able to put up a wonderful fight for freedom, even though taken at a disadvantage.

He realized that he would have to end the affair and make his escape quickly, if at all, for he remembered what General Cornwallis had said, and realized that soon there would be redcoats swarming around him thicker than bees around a hive.

Under such circumstances he exerted himself to the utmost, and so fiercely did he struggle that the redcoat found himself lifted in the air in spite of all he could do, the spy rising to his feet even though his would-be captor was doing all he could to prevent it.

Then of a sudden—so suddenly, in fact, that the redcoat did not know how it was done—Dick hurled his assailant high in the air, and darted away.

At the same instant the redcoat gave utterance to a wild yell of anger and disappointment, and from every direction soldiers came running.

"I'll have to get away from here lively, now," thought

Dick, setting his teeth firmly. "The entire British force will be at my heels in a moment."

Just as Dick reached the edge of the timber several voices cried "There he goes!" and then crack, crack, crack! went the muskets, and the bullets whistled all around the fugitive.

CHAPTER VIII.

PURSUED BY TARLETON.

Instantly the entire British encampment was in an uproar. Some thought they were attacked, and there was a hurried grabbing of weapons. Others, however, knew what the excitement was about, and they set out in pursuit of the fugitive.

General Cornwallis was greatly excited, and several times expressed the hope that the spy would be captured.

"And when he is captured he will be found to be none other than Dick Slater himself," he declared.

"But in case he is not captured, which I think very probable, will he not carry the warning to his men that they are to be attacked?" asked Major Tarleton.

"Quite likely," was the reply.

"Then would it not be a good plan for me to take my force and go to the encampment of these 'Liberty Boys' and make the attack on them at once? If this is not done they will break camp and get away, will they not?"

"You are right, major," agreed Cornwallis. "Get your force ready and start as soon as possible."

"Very good, sir."

"And, Mr. Bender, you accompany the major, and be in readiness to guide him to the encampment."

"Very well, sir."

Then the two hastened away, and twenty minutes later the party was making its way up the road in the direction of the home of Mr. Morgan, just in the rear of which was the "Liberty Boys" encampment, as Black John was aware.

They reached Mr. Morgan's house, and found all quiet there. The lights were out, and apparently everyone in the house was sound asleep. It was only apparently, however; there were several pairs of eyes gazing out upon the force of redcoats.

* * * * *

It had happened that Dick had been forced to leave the British encampment on the side farthest away from the home of Mr. Morgan and the "Liberty Boys" encamp-

ment, and as he was pursued by a large number of redcoats, who spread out as they ran, he was unable to turn back very soon, but was forced to run nearly a mile before doing so. Then he paused, and doubling on his tracks like a fox, he made his way back toward the "Liberty Boys" encampment. He came very near running into the arms of two or three of the redcoats, but his woodcraft stood him in good stead, and he was enabled to avoid them and get through the line.

This accomplished, he ran with all his might, for he suspected that the British might hasten to get the force ready and go and make an attack on the "Liberty Boys," and he felt that that would be terrible.

"I must get back to the camp before Tarleton and his men get there," said Dick to himself. "If I don't they may succeed in surprising the boys and butchering them. I must run as I never ran before."

And he did run as he had never run before, and as luck would have it he succeeded in reaching the encampment while yet the force under Tarleton was a quarter of a mile away.

"Quick, up and away, boys!" cried Dick. "An overwhelming force of redcoats is coming—must be almost here. Hasten."

Those who had thrown themselves down upon their blankets leaped up, rolled up the blankets, and seized their weapons. Those who had not yet laid down were ready very quickly, of course.

"Won't we have time to get our horses?" asked Bob.

"No, we must get away at once. They may be almost upon us. Quick, now! Follow me!"

They hastened away, and scarcely had they got out of the confines of the encampment before they heard the sound of rushing feet, and glancing back saw the redcoats.

"They would have had us in half a minute more," said Dick, "but now they can't catch us."

Major Tarleton was an energetic officer, however, and he was determined to capture the "Liberty Boys," or strike them a severe blow, if such a thing was possible.

"We are too late!" he exclaimed in a tone of disappointment. "They have been warned, and have taken refuge in flight. But we will run them to earth or know the reason why."

"I doubt if they have been gone two minutes," said Black John.

"That is what I think, and we will follow them."

The redcoats set out in pursuit, and when they had gone half a mile they were joined by Black John's party, the members of which, at their leader's suggestion, at once

scattered and acted as scouts and guides, to enable the British to keep on the trail of the fugitives. As the outlaws were skilled in woodcraft, they were enabled to do this, and the British kept on the track where otherwise they could not have done so at all.

About midnight one of the scouts came to Black John with the information that they had the fugitives in a trap.

"You know the old mill, up in the head of Blind Ravine?" he asked.

"Yes, yes," from Black John.

"Well, the fellows you are after have taken refuge there, and as they know we are here at the entrance to the ravine, they dare not try to come back out. They have discovered that they can't go on any farther, and they don't know what to do."

"I think that we will get them, then," said Black John, in grim joy. "There is only one possible chance for them to escape."

"And that?"

"Is by swimming down Mill Creek."

"They would all be drowned if they tried that, for you know the water is cold as ice, it coming from springs up in the hills. They would have cramps before they went a quarter of a mile, and as the walls are straight up and down, and smooth as a floor, they could not escape."

"You are right. We will either capture them or be the means of causing their death, that is certain."

Then Black John conveyed the information of the state of affairs to Major Tarleton.

"Fine! Excellent!" he exclaimed, in a tone of satisfaction. "Now we will put an end to the careers of the 'Liberty Boys.' You are sure there is no other means of escaping than by the river?"

"Yes, I'm sure of it. The ravine is a blind one, and the sides are practically straight up and down. No man could scale them, and the only way of getting out is by coming back to this end, where they entered, or by attempting to swim down the river."

"And you are sure they could not do that?"

"Positive. The water is too cold for human endurance more than a few moments, and they would be seized with cramps, and drown just as sure as they made the effort to escape in that way."

"All right. Then we will simply stop up the hole, and keep the rebels in the trap they have so accommodatingly entered. Then we will take our time, and go at the work of making an end of them at our leisure."

Major Tarleton moved his force forward until it was stretched right across the mouth of the ravine, and then

began to figure on how he should go to work to effect the capture of the "Liberty Boys."

CHAPTER IX.

"GOING IT BLIND."

Dick and his "Liberty Boys" realized that they were being pursued, as soon as they were out of the encampment which they had vacated so hastily, and they moved forward at a rapid pace.

They thought they would have no difficulty in distancing the redcoats, as they knew the latter knew very little of woodcraft, but the manner in which the enemy stuck on their trail proved to the youths that there were some Tories of the vicinity along.

"Likely some of the members of Black John's band are guiding the redcoats," said Dick.

"I judge that you are right, Dick," acquiesced Bob.

"Well, I guess we can get away from them, anyway, guides or no guides."

This proved to be no easy task, however; the redcoats hung to the trail with bulldog-like tenacity, and there seemed to be no such thing as shaking them off.

At last the youths came to the entrance to a deep ravine, and turned up it. They proceeded onward nearly a mile, and then came to an old, deserted mill, which stood with its back right against the upright wall of the ravine, near a point where a stream poured over a bluff one hundred feet above. This stream had at one time turned a water-wheel, which ran the machinery, but now all was silent. The mill was falling to ruins.

After Dick and his "Liberty Boys" had looked about them they made the discovery that they could go no farther. They were in a sort of cul-de-sac, from which there was no way of escape save by the route they had come.

"And that would be dangerous work now," said Dick, "for I have no doubt that the redcoats are at the entrance even now."

"Likely, Dick," agreed Bob.

"Well, the question is, what shall we do?"

"I hardly know, unless we turn back and fight our way through the redcoats."

"I'll send some scouts back to see if the British really have discovered that we entered the ravine," said Dick, and he did so.

The scouts were not gone long, and they returned with

the information that the British were at the entrance to the ravine in force.

"I heard some of the talk," said Mark Morrison, who was one of the scouts, "and they seem to be confident that they will capture us."

"So they feel confident of it, do they?" remarked Dick.

"Yes. Black John and his men are with him, and the outlaw chief told Tarleton that the only chance for us to escape him was by swimming down the creek, but that the water of the creek was so cold that it would give any one the cramps in a few seconds, and that we would lose our lives if we attempted that."

"Humph. I had thought of escaping by way of the creek," said Dick. "Let's examine and see how cold the water is."

This was done, and it was found that the water of the stream was almost as cold as ice.

"It would certainly be death to try to escape by swimming down the stream," agreed Dick. "It looks bad for us."

"It does, sure," agreed Bob. "We will have to do something at once, Dick, or it will be too late. The enemy will advance up the ravine soon, and if we are to fight them we ought to be getting ready for it."

"So we ought. Well, let's take a look in the old mill. Perhaps we may be able to use it as a fort and repulse the redcoats even though they outnumber us greatly."

The youths entered the old mill, and after making a brief survey, decided that they could hold it against the redcoats. Bob, who went rummaging about, presently returned to Dick, in some excitement.

"I've made a discovery, Dick," he said.

"What, Bob?"

"In the big back room there are a lot of casks."

"A lot of casks?"

"Yes. I suppose they had them to put flour in. They are tight and solid."

"Well, what of that? I don't see what there is in this to be of interest to us, Bob."

"You don't?"

"No."

"Well, I do."

"Then tell me, at once."

"All right. You know we decided that the water was too cold in the stream for us to risk trying to make our escape by swimming."

"So we did."

"Exactly. Well, what is to hinder us from getting in the

casks and floating down the stream? Use the casks as boats, in fact."

"Jove! that's an idea, Bob," exclaimed Dick.

"I think so."

"But there are not enough casks, are there?"

"I think so. There is a large room back there, and it is full of casks. I should say there are more than a hundred."

"Well, that will be just the thing if the casks will keep the water out."

"I am confident they will; they are strong and solid."

"Good! then we will make the attempt; but—hist! There comes the enemy now! We will have to give them a fight before getting away."

"Well, that suits me," said Bob, grimly. "I would like a chance at 'Butcher Tarleton.'"

"I am not averse to dealing him a blow before getting away from here."

Dick at once gave orders for the youths to be ready to fire when he gave the word, and then they waited for the enemy to approach near enough so that the bullets from the muskets would be effective.

They did not have long to wait. Suddenly, with loud yells, the redcoats came rushing toward the old mill. Dick waited till the redcoats were close at hand, and then gave the command to fire.

Crash—roar! the volley rang out.

Terrible execution was done.

The "Liberty Boys" were old hands, and took aim before firing.

Fifty of the British went down, and on the air rose the screams and yells of pain and anger, intermingled with which were the oaths and curses from wounded and unwounded alike.

"Quick, now! With the pistols!" cried Dick, and in quick succession two more volleys were poured into the ranks of the redcoats.

This was too much for even "Butcher Tarleton" and his men.

They had not expected such a reception, and they turned and fled at the top of their speed, nor did they stop till they were halfway to the mouth of the ravine.

Here Tarleton managed to get the men to stop, and he began berating them soundly for fleeing.

"The idea of nearly four hundred men running from one hundred!" he cried. "It is absurd."

"But remember who the hundred men are, major," protested one of the men.

"Bah! We don't care anything about that. The 'Lib-

erty Boys' are no more invulnerable than any other men. We must return to the attack, and this time there must be no fleeing. I'll shoot the first man I see turn to run."

"But they are practically in a fort," said one.

"No matter. We must enter the old mill and engage them in a hand-to-hand combat. If we do that they will be at our mercy."

The men did not seem to be so sure about it, but of course they would have to obey their commander, and he gave orders that they were to advance to within fifty yards of the mill, and then charge forward on the run and enter the mill in spite of all resistance.

Meanwhile the "Liberty Boys" had not been idle. Leaving four of the youths on guard, to watch for the coming of the enemy, the others made their way into the room where the casks were, and began rolling them out and down to the side of the creek.

The wounded redcoats watched the youths with wondering eyes, and seemed to be puzzled to figure out what the move meant. They were soon to learn.

At last all the casks had been brought out, and they were counted. It was found that there were more than a hundred, so there would be a sufficient number and a few to spare.

"Say, it's lucky they are good-sized barrels," said Bob. "I think they will carry us safely."

"Yes, if there does not happen to be falls in the stream," said Dick gravely.

"Jove! do you think there are falls down the stream, Dick?" asked Bob.

"I don't know, but it is more than possible."

"You are right. Say, we are taking big chances, after all, in making the trip down the stream in the barrels, fellows."

"That's right. We will be practically 'going it blind,'" said Mark Morrison. "For we don't know anything about the stream, or what we are going to encounter."

"Well, we know what we will have to encounter if we stay here," said Dick, "so we will choose the lesser of the evils, and risk the trip down the stream in the barrels."

Fearing the redcoats might return to the attack at any moment, no more time was lost than was absolutely necessary. Even while talking they had been putting the barrels into the water, and now they began getting in the barrels and pushing off from the shore. This work was done very speedily, and ten minutes later all had embarked.

The "Liberty Boys" did not know where they would bring up—they were practically "going it blind"—but they went ahead as if there was no danger at all to be

apprehended, and one after another they went floating down the stream.

They presented rather a strange spectacle as they floated away, but little did they care for this. They did not care for looks; it was safety they were after.

It was no easy matter to guide the barrels; and, too, the casks showed a predilection for tipping over that was hard to counteract. The utmost circumspection was required to keep from upsetting, and the youths were very careful, for they realized that a spill into the cold water would be anything but pleasant.

Just as the "Liberty Boys" floated out of sight of the wounded redcoats—the moonlight making it possible to see fairly well—the British force again appeared, all ready to make another and more desperate and determined attack.

CHAPTER X.

THE "LIBERTY BOYS" DO GOOD WORK.

When Tarleton reached the point where his wounded and dead men lay the former informed him that the "Liberty Boys" had escaped.

"Escaped!" Tarleton exclaimed. "How can that be possible?"

"They didn't swim down the creek, did they?" asked Black John.

"No, they didn't swim," was the reply, "but they went that way."

"They didn't have boats, did they?" cried Tarleton.

"Yes, they had boats," the wounded redcoat replied, with a grin—he was not severely wounded. "They had the funniest boats you ever saw or heard of."

"What kind of boats were they?"

"Barrels."

"What!" cried Tarleton.

"Barrels!" exclaimed Black John.

"Yes, barrels. They got them out of the old mill, and every rebel had a barrel, and the whole crowd went floating down the stream just before you got here."

A deep and bitter oath escaped the lips of Major Tarleton. "They have escaped us, after all," he cried, "and after killing and wounding a number of my men, too, Black John," turning to the Tory, "is there no possible chance of heading the rebels off, and capturing them? How far from here to where they will land?"

"This stream runs into the Roanoke River at a point

three miles from here," said Black John, "and I doubt our being able to get there in time to head them off."

"We will make the attempt, at any rate," cried Tarleton.

Then he detailed fifty men to bury the dead and take care of the wounded and get them back to the British encampment, and with the rest of his force hurried away under the guidance of Black John.

A forced march on the double-quick brought them to the mouth of the creek, where it emptied into the Roanoke River, but they saw no signs of the youths who had escaped them in such a clever manner.

"They got here ahead of us," said Black John. "I was confident that they would."

"But where are they now, do you think?" asked Tarleton.

"It is hard to say. They may have gone on down the river in the barrels."

"Well," said the major after some thought, "I guess the only thing for us to do is to return to the encampment and report that we met with defeat and disappointment."

"It looks as if that is what will have to be done."

"Yes, but I can tell you one thing, and that is, that if ever I get another chance at the 'Liberty Boys' I will make it warm for them. I will get even with them for this night's work sooner or later."

* * * * *

As Black John had surmised, the "Liberty Boys" had emerged from the mouth of Mill Creek into the Roanoke River before the redcoats got there.

Dick thought it best to go down the river a ways before going ashore, and this was done. A mile down the stream they pushed in to the shore, and abandoning the barrels that had served them in such good stead, they struck out through the timber.

The youths were such expert woodsmen that they did not have much difficulty in finding their way back to the home of Mr. Morgan, and Mr. Morgan's folks were delighted to see them.

"We feared you would be captured," said Mr. Morgan.

"We had a brush with the redcoats," said Dick, "but managed to inflict some damage without receiving any ourselves, and later on in making our escape." Then he told the manner in which they had escaped, and the hearers uttered exclamations of surprise and delight.

"That beats anything I ever heard of," said Tom Morgan.

"Yes," said Dick, "and now that we are safe we wish to remain so. We will have to change our camping-ground, but will not go far, as we wish to be where we can render

you assistance if the redcoats offer to injure you, Mr. Morgan."

"I'm much obliged, Mr. Slater," was the grateful reply.

"We will get our horses and steal away before Tarleton and his force gets back here."

"I will go with you, and show you a splendid camping-place, Dick," said Tom Morgan. "It is not more than half a mile away, but is in such a secluded spot that I don't think the redcoats will find you."

The youths got their horses, and then the entire force moved away through the timber until the spot Tom had in mind was reached. It was all that could be desired, and Dick was well pleased.

"This will do splendidly, Tom," he said, and then he gave the order to go into camp.

The youths obeyed, and half an hour later the "Liberty Boys" were fixed as comfortably as was possible. Dick ordered out a double set of sentinels, and then the youths lay down to get some sleep and rest, Tom taking his departure, to return to his home.

Acting under Dick's orders, Sam Sanderson, one of the most trustworthy of the "Liberty Boys," had made preparations for a journey, and he now mounted his horse, and took his departure, going toward the north.

He was bound for Richmond, to carry the news of the coming of Cornwallis and his army to General Lafayette.

* * * * *

When the home of the Morgans was reached by Tarleton and his force all was quiet. The house was wrapped in darkness, and it seemed as if the inmates were all asleep.

"This is the home of a rebel, Major Tarleton," said Black John, as they paused in the yard and surveyed the house. "Why not burn the house down?"

"I don't care to do that—to-night," was the reply. "I will rouse the owner up, however, and try to secure some information from him."

"You won't get much information from a rebel like him," muttered Black John.

Tarleton pounded on the door, and finally managed to make some one hear. It was Mr. Morgan, who presently appeared at the door, which he opened without hesitation, for he realized that with three hundred men there it would be useless to attempt to bar them out if they wished to enter.

"What is your name?" asked Tarleton, sharply.

"Joe Morgan, sir."

"Humph. Rebel or loyalist?"

"Neither, sir."

"Bah! if you are not for the king you are against him."

"I don't look at it that way, sir."

"I do. But enough of that for the present. Do you know where that band of youths who call themselves the 'Liberty Boys' are?"

"I don't know who you mean, sir."

"You lie. Those scoundrels that had a camp back of your barn lot were the 'Liberty Boys,' and you know it."

"I assure you you are mistaken, sir. The young men came along and wanted to camp there, and as they were so many I knew it would be useless to try to keep them from doing so, and did not try. But I did not know who they were."

"Bah! I don't believe you. But no matter about that; if you can tell me where they are now, it will be all right."

"I have not the least idea, sir. The last I saw of them they were making off in a hurry, and then you came along in pursuit of them."

"And they have not been back here since?—within the past hour?"

"Not that I am aware of, sir."

A low curse escaped the lips of Major Tarleton. "I don't know whether you are telling the truth or not," he said, "and I will let the matter rest for the present. I may see you in the morning, however, and beware how you attempt to deceive me, then."

With a grunt which expressed unbelief, Major Tarleton turned and strode away, his men following him. Mr. Morgan stood in the door and watched them till they had disappeared from sight, and then, just as he was on the point of closing the door, there came the patter of feet, and Dick Willis appeared in front of the door.

"What! is it you, Dick?" cried Mr. Morgan, in delight. "Come in, quick. The girls will be tickled to see you."

"Is Sister Nellie here?"

"Yes, and she and Mary both have been well-nigh distracted ever since it became known that you had disappeared."

There was the sound of excited voices in Mary Morgan's room, and Dick Willis had not much more than got into the house and Mr. Morgan had closed the door before the girls rushed forth from Mary's room and seized Dick Willis in a loving embrace.

After the greetings Dick told them that he had been a prisoner in the hands of Black John's band, but had made his escape, and had come straight to Mr. Morgan's house.

"I'm hungry as a bear, too," he added, and as may well be supposed, Mary and Nellie hastened to set some food on the table in the kitchen and wait on him solicitously.

The "Liberty Boys" remained in the neighborhood in spite of the British, who made a thorough search for them next day; more, the youths struck two of the searching forces hard blows and got away without being damaged any to speak of in return.

This angered Cornwallis, but he felt that he could not afford to lose any more time in trying to effect the capture of the "Liberty Boys," so on the next morning the British army resumed its march toward the north.

For some unexplainable reason the redcoats did not burn the home of Mr. Morgan, and this made Black John so angry that he decided to do it himself, and that evening, just after dark, he gathered his men together and proceeded to the home of the patriot and ordered him to get out of the house if he wished to save the lives of himself and the members of his family.

Of course Mr. Morgan and his folks obeyed, as they knew Black John to be a desperate and cruel-hearted fiend, and they expected nothing else than that their home would go down in ashes.

This was not to be, however, for just as one of the scoundrels was about to apply the torch Dick Slater and his "Liberty Boys" appeared on the scene, and they dropped every one of the members of Black John's band, the leader included, at the first volley.

It was a clean sweep, for those who were not killed outright were mortally wounded, and died soon afterward, Black John being among these.

The "Liberty Boys" buried the dead outlaws, and then settled down there and remained till morning. Then, bidding good-bye to the Morgans, the "Liberty Boys" rode away on the trail of Cornwallis' army.

They followed it to Petersburg, and the "Liberty Boys" made their way to Richmond and rejoined Lafayette's army.

THE END.

The next number (88) of "The Liberty Boys of '76" will contain "THE LIBERTY BOYS' BLACK BAND OR, BUMPING THE BRITISH HARD," by Harry Moore.

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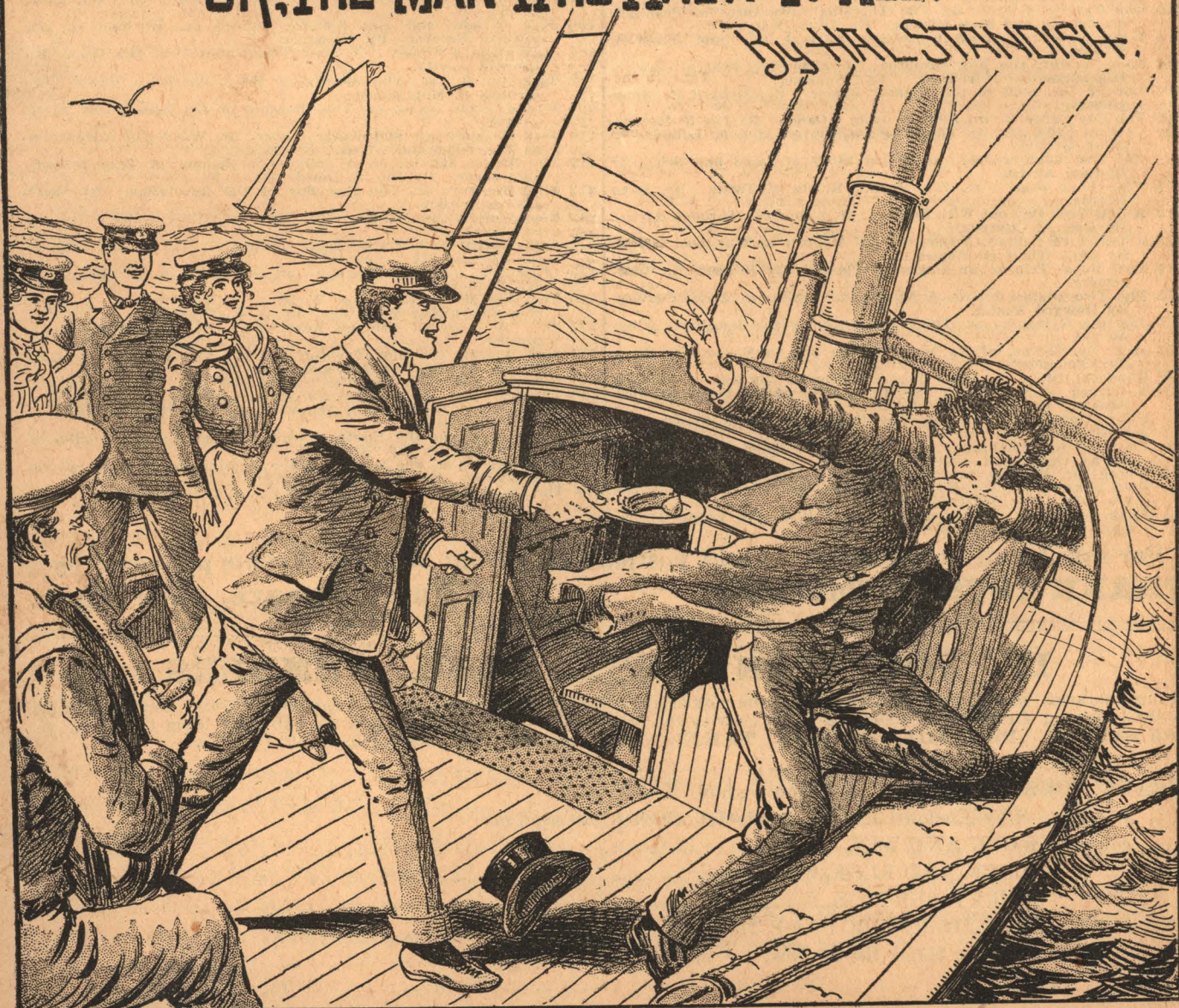
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